

**English Catholic Eschatology, 1558 – 1603.**

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of  
Cambridge.

### Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

At 79,339 words it does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the History Degree Committee.

## **Abstract**

Early modern English Catholic eschatology, the belief that the present was the last age and an associated concern with mankind's destiny, has been overlooked in the historiography. Historians have established that early modern Protestants had an eschatological understanding of the present. This thesis seeks to balance the picture and the sources indicate that there was an early modern English Catholic counter narrative. This thesis suggests that the Catholic eschatological understanding of contemporary events affected political action. It investigates early modern English Catholic eschatology in the context of proscription and persecution of Catholicism between 1558 and 1603.

Devotional eschatology was the corner stone of individual Catholic eschatology and placed earthly life in an apocalyptic time-frame. Catholic devotional works challenged the regime and questioned Protestantism. Devotional eschatology is suggestive of a worldview which expected an impending apocalypse but there was a reluctance to date the End. With an eschatological outlook normalised by daily devotional eschatology the Reformation and contemporary events were interpreted apocalyptically. An apocalyptic understanding of the break with Rome was not exclusively Protestant. Indeed, the identification of Antichrist was not just a Protestant concern but rather the linchpin of Reformation debates between Catholics and Protestants. Some identified Elizabeth as Jezebel, the Whore of Babylon. The Bull of Excommunication of 1570 and its language provided papal authority for identifications of Elizabeth as the Whore. The execution of Mary Queen of Scots was a flashpoint which enabled previously hidden ideas to burst into public discourse. This was dangerous as eschatology and apocalypticism was a language of political action.

An eschatological understanding of contemporary events encouraged conspiracy. The divine plan required human agents. Catholic prophecy and conspiracy show that eschatology did not just affect how the future was thought about but also had implications for the present. This thesis raises questions about Catholic loyalism which other scholars have also begun to challenge. Yet attempts to depose or murder the monarch was not the only response which could be adopted. Belief that one was living in the End also supported what this thesis terms 'militant passivity'. Martyrs understood their suffering as a form of eschatological agency which revealed and confirmed the identities of the Antichrist and the Whore. The Book of the

Apocalypse promised that they would be rewarded at God's approaching Judgement and the debates of the Reformation would be settled by the ultimate Judge. As martyrs came to symbolise the English Catholic community, it came to understand itself eschatologically. This thesis argues that acknowledging the eschatological dimensions of Catholic perception and action helps us to re-think the nature of early modern English Catholicism.

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<sup>1</sup> For you Aidan, pictures are included.



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## **Introduction**

On the 27 August 1592 the twenty-three year old Robert Markham used eschatology to justify to his parents why he had fled to the continent without their permission. In a sorrowful letter written at Gravesend Markham explained that while he still deeply loved them he was convinced that the Catholic Church was the True Church and that remaining in Protestant England could only lead to damnation.<sup>1</sup> Markham described living in fear of death, saying that he could not sleep in case he died, and that when he prayed he had no hope of being heard because he was not reconciled.<sup>2</sup> Markham assured his parents that he would not enter into conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth or join the forces of England's enemies, but he had ultimately left because he 'hoped to be saved at the latter day'.<sup>3</sup> Eschatology and apocalypticism were powerful motivators for early modern English Catholics.

The central argument of this thesis is that eschatology and apocalypticism were not monopolised by early modern Protestants. There was an eschatological dialogue between the two faiths and an alternate Catholic understanding of the end times and apocalypse. This eschatological worldview had significant implications and could lead Catholics to view themselves as eschatological agents. It also sustained many who suffered at the hands of the state with the idea that God would be the ultimate judge and assign punishment and rewards. This thesis explores early modern English Catholic eschatology in the context of proscription and persecution of Catholicism in England between 1558 and 1603. Elizabeth's reign witnessed the solidification of Protestant power in England and the pushing of the Catholic faith underground. It provided early modern Europe with Catholic martyrs and imposed and extended persecution beyond priests and political dissidents to ordinary Catholics through the imposition of the penal laws. Attendance at Protestant churches was made compulsory as a test of a subject's loyalty as religion was politicised. The energy of the Continental Catholic Reformation entered England with missionary priests and Jesuits who made it their goal to reconvert their home nation to the true faith. Catholic conspiracies designed to effect regime change, foreign assistance in reconverting England, and the war with Spain culminating in the

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<sup>1</sup> British Library, Lansdowne MS 72/43, f.122r (Robert Markham, to his Father, dated from Gravesend; endeavouring to excuse his rash flight and apostasy, Aug. 27, 1592).

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.* Robert Markham, dissatisfied at the power influenced by the Jesuits, later became an informant on the activities of the English College Rome. Markham was described as one of the 'turbulent' students of the English College. See: P. Renold (ed.), *Publications of the Catholic Record Society: The Wisbech stirs (1595-1598)*, Vol. 51 (London, Catholic Record Society, 1958), p. 262.

1588 Armada all contributed to the charged atmosphere of Elizabethan England. The general dualistic perception of the age was one of good versus evil and Protestant discussion of contemporary events in apocalyptic terms all added to the eschatological climate in which English Catholics lived. Nevertheless, we must be cautious. This thesis focuses closely on one strand of early modern English Catholic thought and such a concentration runs the risk of stretching ideas out of proportion. Early modern English Catholics had an eschatological worldview but they were complex individuals with a range of concerns.

### **Definitions**

Eschatology, from the Greek *eschatos*, is the study of the ‘last things’ and includes death, the individual judgement, the general judgement, heaven and hell. It is teleological in the sense that it views the present in terms of the end of all things and their purpose in regard to this cessation. The word eschatology will be used in this thesis when there is attention to and discussion of the last things but not a specific application of biblical prophecies about the End. Eschatology is a broad category which includes apocalypticism. However, not all eschatological understandings of the present are apocalyptic. Apocalypse means a revelation and is strictly defined within Christianity as God revealing details of the end or purpose to women or men either directly or using an otherworldly mouthpiece. Apocalypse has also been used to describe a genre, complicating the term further.<sup>4</sup> John J. Collins, Bernard McGinn and Stephen J. Stein have deployed apocalypticism to refer ‘to the complex of ideas associated with the New Testament Apocalypse, especially the imminent end of history and the catastrophic events that it entails’.<sup>5</sup> McGinn adds to this the notion that ‘the essential message of the Apocalypse is not about man’s power, but about God’s’.<sup>6</sup> He further defines

Apocalyptic eschatology or apocalypticism... as a sense of the meaning of history that sees the present as inexorably tied to the approaching final triple drama of crisis, judgment, and vindication – [which]

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<sup>4</sup> This is discussed by B. McGinn, ‘Early Apocalypticism’, in: C. A. Patrides & J. A. Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, antecedents and repercussions* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 3 – 5.

<sup>5</sup> B. McGinn, J. J. Collins, S. Stein (eds.), *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* (London, Continuum, 2003), p. ix.

<sup>6</sup> B. McGinn, ‘Symbols of the Apocalypse in Medieval Culture: The Bible and its Traditions’, *A Special Issue of the Michigan Quarterly Review*, Vol. 22, 1983, p. 266.

necessarily works through the use of symbols and the symbolic mentality.<sup>7</sup>

However, Carole Straw cautions that ‘Not every writer made an explicit equation of his or her own times with the end... A more accurate index of apocalypticism is simply the liberal use of signal passages and imagery from the Bible such as those from the Apocalypse of John, or the dire predictions of Christ of persecution and catastrophe to befall Jerusalem’.<sup>8</sup> There is no scholarly consensus about the meaning of apocalypticism or what should be considered an ‘apocalypse’. However this thesis will use the term apocalypse/apocalypticism in specific reference to the application of the apocalyptic prophecies of the Bible to current events such as those contained in the Apocalypse of John, Daniel, Matthew and the Old Testament warnings.

Apocalypticism can be further broken down into different understandings of the application of the prophecies contained in the Book of the Apocalypse. There was a wide spectrum of apocalypticism with important distinctions between interpretations. The first exegetical method was idealism which argued that the Apocalypse teaches universal truths but does not describe real future events or a specific time. The second explanation was preterist which claimed that the Apocalypse describes the history of the early church and the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem. Alternatively, futurists understood the prophecies of the Apocalypse to describe real events in a distinct time before the Second Coming and placed it in a distant future age. Historicists perceived the prophecies of the Apocalypse as occurring sequentially in time with real events following the chapters and order recorded in the Apocalypse. Crawford Gribben has presented a broader definition of historicism and argued that historicism ‘refuses to identify an end-point for biblical prophetic fulfilment... instead these prophecies refer to specific events in the entire course of church history’.<sup>9</sup> Gribben has identified that ‘Roman Catholic writers... adopted historicist readings to counter early Lutheran claims regarding the papacy’.<sup>10</sup> When we encounter English Catholics in the Elizabethan period applying the Apocalypse to their own age this shows that they had a historicist understanding.

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> C. Straw, ‘Settling Scores: Eschatology in the Church of the Martyrs’, in: C. Walker Bynum & P. Freedman (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 25.

<sup>9</sup> C. Gribben, *Evangelical Millennialism in the Trans-Atlantic World, 1500-2000* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

## **Historiography**

Kenneth C. G. Newport has added a further category of apocalyptic exegesis to describe early modern Catholic uses of the Apocalypse which he has termed ‘Counter-historicism’.<sup>11</sup> Newport contends that the proponents of a counter-historicist view claimed that ‘the Protestants were right in seeing the books of Daniel and Revelation, and other portions of the Bible, as a “time map”... However on the details of the correspondence between scripture and history... the Protestants had erred’.<sup>12</sup> Newport has advanced our understanding of apocalyptic exegesis and early modern Catholic apocalyptic exegesis, particularly in the context of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, Newport defines and presents Catholic apocalypticism as only a reaction to and in light of Protestant apocalypticism. Why was Catholic apocalypticism ‘counter-historicist’ and not historicist? Were not some Catholics also historicists even if they viewed the details differently? With regard to other Catholic approaches to the Apocalypse Newport maintains that ‘It must be remembered that it was in the context of the onslaught upon the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church in general that the preterist and futurist counter readings were launched’ and that Catholics emptied the present of prophetic fulfilment.<sup>13</sup> This alludes to the idea that it was only with the advent of Protestantism that Catholics engaged with the prophecies of the Apocalypse and appeared to diverge from the apocalypticism of the Middle Ages. The evidence presented in this thesis suggests that Elizabethan English Catholics did not empty the present of prophetic fulfilment. The Elizabethan Catholics do not feature in Newport’s study; rather he attributes the rise of futurism to the Jesuit scholar Francisco Ribera and his commentary on the Apocalypse published in c.1590 – 1591.<sup>14</sup> Elizabethan Catholic devotional eschatology, responses to persecution, interest in identifying Jezebel and political action surveyed in this thesis reveal that early modern Catholic eschatology and apocalypticism was widely present before Ribera’s work and not necessarily connected to defending the Pope against the identification of Antichrist.

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<sup>11</sup> K. G. C. Newport, *Apocalypse and Millennium: Studies in Biblical Eisegesis* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 66.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*



The importance of eschatology and apocalypticism as a cultural force has been researched and stressed in the last few decades. Robert Bruce Barnes has argued that apocalypticism shaped contemporary reality and consequently that ‘the history of eschatology lies at the heart of the history of culture and of civilisation itself’.<sup>15</sup> Due to their cultural currency, eschatology and apocalypticism were also used as effective forms of propaganda. Patrick Collinson has claimed that ‘the dualistic theme of the true and the false bishop was an indispensable polemical weapon in the justification of the protestant schism, as was the whole apocalyptic scheme of church history to which it belonged’.<sup>16</sup> Eschatology and apocalypticism were powerful polemical tools because they utilised a pre-existing and deeply held worldview. They cannot be dismissed simply as polemic. Indeed, Barnes has cautioned that ‘the effort of reconstruction must avoid reducing the apocalyptic world-view either to a simple function of political, social or economic forces, or to a purely subjective expression of religious experience’.<sup>17</sup> Bernard McGinn has stressed that ‘apocalypticism was a way in which contemporary political and social events were given religious validation by incorporation into a transcendent scheme of meaning’.<sup>18</sup> This thesis suggests that Elizabethan Catholics understood contemporary events within an eschatological and apocalyptic scheme of meaning, formulating new ideas for their new circumstances and adapting traditions which they had inherited from the Middle Ages.

Apocalypticism has largely been studied in the context of the Middle Ages, an era from which the Elizabethan period inherited ideas. Brett Whalen in *Dominion of God* has assessed apocalypticism from 991 to the discovery of the New World and the idea that Christianity had to spread before the End.<sup>19</sup> Bernard McGinn in his work *Visions of the End* focuses on apocalypticism in the period between 400 – 1500.<sup>20</sup> McGinn has shown through his translation of key medieval texts that eschatology and apocalypticism constituted a vibrant and

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<sup>15</sup> R. B. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 19, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> P. Collinson, *Godly People: Essays in English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London, The Hambledon Press, 1983), p. 159.

<sup>17</sup> R. B. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> B. McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the High Middle Ages* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 31.

<sup>19</sup> B. E. Whalen, *The Dominion of God: Christendom and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (London, Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> B. McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1998).

multifaceted tradition in pre-Reformation Catholicism.<sup>21</sup> McGinn's work highlights how these beliefs spanned centuries, with each generation of scholars adding to existing interpretations. Richard Kenneth Emmerson, in partnership with McGinn, has edited a collection of seventeen essays exploring the role of the Apocalypse in the thought, art and culture of the Middle Ages, while he and Ronald B. Herzman have assessed the widespread nature of apocalypticism in medieval literature between Bonaventure and Dante to the Canterbury Tales.<sup>22</sup> Lisa LeBlanc has researched how the English Doomsday Plays provided social criticism and had the secondary purpose of saving the souls of the audience.<sup>23</sup> LeBlanc has argued that 'the plays go beyond simply enacting a religious ritual to sounding a clear warning about the possibility of the coming of the apocalypse', which reinforced the apocalyptic expectation brought about by social upheavals.<sup>24</sup> Kathryn Kerby-Fulton has examined how Langland's 'Piers Plowman' was influenced by clerical reformist apocalypticism and how it in turn transmitted these ideas in the later Middle Ages.<sup>25</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman's edited collection has considered together three different types of eschatologies and assessed how in the Middle Ages 'eschatological understandings hovered over human experience'.<sup>26</sup> Robert Lerner has reconstructed the transmittance and influence of an astrological prophecy across the centuries and in different countries, showing the ordinary concern with the End.<sup>27</sup> Alongside the study of the broader apocalyptic cultural trend of the Middle Ages there has been scholarly interest in particular apocalyptic individuals and movements. Marjorie Reeves's *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages* brought back to scholarly attention the persistence of the popularity and authority of the apocalyptic abbot Joachim of Fiore.<sup>28</sup> Reeve's work inspired a renewed concentration on this towering figure of apocalyptic thought in the Middle Ages and

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<sup>21</sup> B. McGinn (trans.), *Apocalyptic Spirituality: Treatises and Letters of Lactantius, Adso of Montier-en-Der, Joachim of Fiore, the Franciscan Spirituals, Savonarola* (Mahwah, Paulist Press, 1979).

<sup>22</sup> R. K. Emmerson & B. McGinn, *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1993), R. K. Emmerson & R. B. Herzman, *The Apocalyptic Imagination in Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).

<sup>23</sup> L. LeBlanc, 'Social Upheaval and the English Doomsday Plays', in: K. Kinane & M. A. Ryan (eds.), *End of Days: Essays on the Apocalypse from Antiquity to Modernity* (London, McFarland & Company, 2009), pp. 87-102.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* p. 90.

<sup>25</sup> K. Kerby-Fulton, *Reformist Apocalypticism and Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> C. Walker Bynum & P. Freedman (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> R. E. Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy: The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (London, Cornell University Press, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> M. Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages: A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).

the groups his works subsequently inspired.<sup>29</sup> Studies of individual visionaries such as Hildegard of Bingen and preachers such as Bernardino of Siena have emphasised the power of apocalyptic expectation in encouraging individual reform amongst Catholics.<sup>30</sup> These scholars have shown that there was a vibrant Catholic eschatological tradition throughout Christianity prior to the Reformation.

This thesis builds on this body of scholarship to show that this tradition did not die with the Reformation and the arrival of Protestantism. In fact the divine plan as expressed through biblical prophecies and teachings and their relationship to contemporary events became the subject of intense dispute during the Reformation and the decades following it. McGinn contends that the 'war over apocalypticism rapidly became an important element in the struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism'.<sup>31</sup> Adrian Morey has underscored how both Catholics and Protestants viewed the Reformation as 'a battle against the forces of evil that admitted no compromise' but did not interrogate this idea further.<sup>32</sup> Emerson has also overlooked post-Reformation Catholic eschatology and argued that, although 'Historicising of the Apocalypse as an outline of Church history was already occurring in the Middle Ages', it was Protestant commentators who continued this trend.<sup>33</sup> Emerson has highlighted that 'Protestants often interpreted the Reformation as fulfilling an apocalyptic role' but he does not consider that Catholics also viewed the break with Rome apocalyptically.<sup>34</sup> This thesis will challenge the idea that it was only Protestants who continued to historicise the Apocalypse. The Reformation was not one sided. Catholic apocalyptic views and eschatology in England have so far been neglected. The historiography of apocalypticism following the Reformation has generally focused on Protestant beliefs. For instance, Bryan Ball contends that 'reformers in general may be regarded as germinal to the more developed eschatology which appeared in

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<sup>29</sup> B. McGinn, *The Calabrain Abbot: Joachim of Fiore in the history of Western thought* (New York, Macmillan, 1985), I. Delio, "From Prophecy to Mysticism: Bonaventure's Eschatology in Light of Joachim of Fiore," *Traditio*, no. 52 (1997), pp. 153 – 177, W. Gould & M. Reeves (eds.), *Joachim of Fiore and the Myth of the Eternal Evangel in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Oxford, Clarendon, 2001), D. Burr, *Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century After Saint Francis* (Pennsylvania, Penn State Press, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> B. Newman (ed.), *Voice of the Living Light: Hildegard of Bingen and Her World* (London, University of California Press, 1998), S. Flanagan, *Hildegard of Bingen: A Visionary Life* (London, Routledge, 2002), F. Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (London, University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>31</sup> B. McGinn, 'Wrestling with the Millennium: Early Modern Catholic Exegesis of Apocalypse 20', in: A. Amanat & M. T. Bernardsson (eds.), *Imagining the End: Visions of the Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2002), p. 157.

<sup>32</sup> A. Morey, *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1978), p. 75.

<sup>33</sup> R. K. Emerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Washington, University of Washington Press, 1982), p. 208.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

the sixteenth century'.<sup>35</sup> Robin Bruce Barnes made the bold claim that 'Lutheranism was the only major confession of the Reformation era to give a clear, virtually doctrinal sanction to a powerful sense of eschatological expectation'.<sup>36</sup> Paul Christianson discusses Bale and Foxe but then moves swiftly on to Protestant beliefs in the 1590s, 1600s and the English Civil War while Katherine Firth has analysed the puritan use of the Apocalypse to interpret history between 1530 – 1645.<sup>37</sup> Martin Ballard has studied the persistence of apocalyptic ideas throughout history and in his consideration of later Christianity has analysed how apocalyptic expectation was used to challenge the Catholic Church.<sup>38</sup>

Works on early modern Protestant apocalypticism have tended to investigate the role of eschatology in radicalism and challenging the established order. Published in 1961, Norman Cohn's *Pursuit of the Millennium* may be considered symbolic of most previous research on apocalypticism as it presents its role in medieval dissent, gives brief attention to the uprising in Munster and the apocalypticism of Martin Luther himself before detailing in the appendix the millenarian beliefs purportedly espoused by the Ranters in England.<sup>39</sup> William Lamont contended that millennialism needed to be taken seriously and was too often 'dismissed as a creed for cranks'.<sup>40</sup> Lamont's appeal was heeded and a wave of historical study investigated the impact of millennialism on early modern British politics. Hugh Trevor Roper showed how John Dury and Samuel Hartlib's belief that the reunification of the Protestant Church would usher in a millennial era influenced their political engagement.<sup>41</sup> Bernard Capp has revealed the power of millennialism to challenge the political order during and immediately after the English Civil War while Christopher Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down* surveyed radical ideas following the English Civil War and presented the different strains

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<sup>35</sup> B. W. Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism Until 1660* (Leiden, Brill, 1975), p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> R. B. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> P. Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Vision from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (London, University of Toronto Press, 1978), K. Firth, *Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain: 1550 – 1645* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>38</sup> M. Ballard, *End-Timers: Three Thousand Years of Waiting for Judgment Day* (Oxford, ABC-CLIO, 2011), pp. 81 – 99.

<sup>39</sup> N. Cohn, *The pursuit of the millennium: revolutionary millenarians and mystical anarchists of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1961).

<sup>40</sup> W. Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion 1603-1660* (London, Macmillan, 1969), p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> H. Trevor-Roper, 'Three Foreigners: the Philosophers of the Puritan Revolution', in: *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, 3rd edn. (London, Secker & Warburg, 1984), pp. 237 – 93.

of apocalypticism which emerged.<sup>42</sup> Since Cohn's study early modern English apocalypticism has been largely examined with the English Civil Wars and Restoration in mind. Even acclaimed historians such as Richard Bauckham argue regarding Tudor millenarianism that its 'significance can be seen only retrospectively in the light of its seventeenth century development'.<sup>43</sup> Bryan Ball has maintained that the 'tide of opinion concerning the second coming of Christ and the end of this world had begun to flow early in Elizabeth's reign and would not ebb until its high-water mark had been reached in the middle of the Seventeenth century'.<sup>44</sup> This consideration of Elizabethan apocalyptic ideas in light of and in comparison to future developments removes them from their context.

Nevertheless, studies of John Foxe have considered his apocalypticism in its own context with its own consequences.<sup>45</sup> Building on research into Foxe's apocalypticism there has been a shift in scholarly interest and studies are now investigating how eschatology and apocalypticism were used to support rather than to challenge the Elizabethan regime. C. A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich have edited a collection of essays which investigate how the Apocalypse was used to support the reformation and reformed rulers.<sup>46</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan has investigated how the Apocalypse significantly influenced the magisterial reformers.<sup>47</sup> Malcolm Thorp has highlighted the relationship between Cecil's views on Antichrist and his treatment of Catholics in England.<sup>48</sup> Thorp contends that 'diplomatic correspondence reveals that apocalyptic imagery had filtered down from the pulpit into

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<sup>42</sup> B. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men: A Study in Seventeenth-Century English Millenarianism* (London, Faber & Faber, 1972), C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London, Penguin, 1976).

<sup>43</sup> R. Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford, Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), p. 208.

<sup>44</sup> B. W. Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism Until 1660* (Leiden, Brill, 1975) p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (London, University of California Press, 1973), R. Bauckham, *Tudor apocalypse : sixteenth century apocalypticism, millenarianism and the English Reformation: from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Sutton, Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), T. Betteridge, 'From Prophetic to Apocalyptic: John Foxe and the Writing of History', in: D. Loades (ed.), *John Foxe and the English Reformation* (Aldershot, Scolar Press, 1997), pp. 210 – 32, A. Escobedo, 'Apocalyptic History and English Defferals' in: A. Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss in Renaissance England: Foxe, Dee, Spenser, Milton* (London, Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 81 – 141.

<sup>46</sup> C. A. Patrides & J. Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance thought and literature: patterns, antecedents and repercussions* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1984).

<sup>47</sup> J. Pelkin, 'Some uses of Apocalypse in the magisterial Reformers' in: C. A. Patrides & J. Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance thought and literature: patterns, antecedents and repercussions* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 74 – 92.

<sup>48</sup> M. Thorp, 'Catholic Conspiracy in Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter, 1984), pp.431 – 448.

the foreign service'.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, Stephen Alford's study of William Cecil has led him to stress that the conflict between Protestant England and Catholic powers was 'Cecil's mission for the rest of his career: light against dark, truth against lies, Christ against Antichrist'.<sup>50</sup>

Early modern Catholics, if they appear, are on the peripheries. For example, Florence Sandler briefly notes two Catholic representations of Elizabeth as Jezebel to provide context to the Protestant apocalyptic representations of Elizabeth in the *Faerie Queene*.<sup>51</sup> Elizabethan Catholics have, however, been the subject of historiographical discussions of Elizabethan eschatology when the influence of eschatology on the Elizabethan regime's perception of its enemies is considered. Ole Peter Grell and Bob Scribner have identified 'a theological-political discourse which inevitably came to identify threats or alternatives to the creation of such a 'community of faith' as a moment of eschatological confrontation'.<sup>52</sup> Frances Dolan similarly analyses the eschatological representation of Catholics during three crises in Protestant/Catholic relations during the seventeenth century.<sup>53</sup> In relation to early modern English Catholics, eschatology has been studied from the Protestant perspective but a consideration of whether Catholics also had an eschatological perception of contemporary events has yet to be undertaken.

Continental Catholic apocalypticism has, however, begun to be the subject of research. McGinn has analysed the works of Italian, Hungarian, Spanish and Portuguese Catholic commentaries on the Apocalypse and concluded that, 'On the basis of a study of some of the most widely disseminated commentaries on the Apocalypse during the period from c. 1525 – c.1625, we can see that millennialism remained a force in Tridentine Catholicism readings of the book until the end of the sixteenth century'.<sup>54</sup> This thesis builds on McGinn's study, which

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<sup>49</sup> M. Thorp, 'Catholic Conspiracy in Early Elizabethan Foreign Policy', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Winter, 1984), p. 443.

<sup>50</sup> S. Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, Yale University Press, 2008), p. 104.

<sup>51</sup> F. Sandler, 'The Faerie Queene: An Elizabethan Apocalypse', in: C. A. Patrides & J. A. Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, antecedents and repercussions* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 162 – 163.

<sup>52</sup> O. P. Grell & B. Scribner, *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 43.

<sup>53</sup> F. E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth Century Culture* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2005).

<sup>54</sup> B. McGinn, 'Wrestling with the Millenium: Early Modern Catholic Exegesis of Apocalypse 20', in: A. Amanat and M. Bernhardsson, *Imagining the End: Visions of Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2002), p. 159.

did not take into account English Catholics during the same period. Barnes's arguments that 'neither in France nor elsewhere in Catholic Europe did apocalyptic interpretation exercise as pervasive an influence as in Protestant settings' and that 'Catholic eschatology remained on the whole less oriented to the historical horizon, more individualized and spiritualized than prevailing Protestant outlooks' is being reconsidered by historians.<sup>55</sup> Geoffrey Parker has examined Philip II's outlook and concluded that it was one of messianic imperialism.<sup>56</sup> Matt Goldish has investigated patterns in *converso* messianism in early modern Spain and the impact of Catholic eschatology on these ideas. Goldish has argued that 'Messianism was particularly susceptible to Catholic influences since the role of the messiah loomed so large in Christian ideas', which suggests that early modern Catholic eschatology was vibrant in Spain.<sup>57</sup> Spanish thought is particularly important because, as Thomas McCoog has argued, 'Spanish hegemony cast a long, dark shadow over English Catholicism'.<sup>58</sup> Karl Kottman has examined the Spanish theologian Luis de Leon and argued that he was 'central for the understanding of Catholic thought after the Council of Trent', which is significant considering the apocalypticism contained in his writings.<sup>59</sup> The Portuguese Jesuit Francisco Ribera has attracted brief attention because of his futurist apocalyptic commentary printed in 1591.<sup>60</sup> A Spanish Jesuit, Luis de Alcazar has received historiographical consideration because of his preterist interpretation of the Apocalypse printed in 1614.<sup>61</sup> These large commentaries and work by the Italian Jesuit Robert Bellarmine, who took an approach to the Apocalypse which followed Ribera's, may have obscured the dynamic tradition of Catholic eschatological thought from the historian's gaze. Yet, Frederic J. Baumgartner reminds us that 'Millennialism was strong amongst Catholics in the late sixteenth century, even if there was no specifically Catholic millennialist groups'.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> R. Bruce Barnes, 'Eschatology, Apocalypticism, and the Antichrist', in: D. M. Whitford (ed.), *T & T Clark Companion to Reformation Theology* (London, T & T Clark, 2012), p. 249.

<sup>56</sup> G. Parker, 'Lecture II, The Messianic Vision of Philip II' in: G. Parker, *The World is Not Enough: The Imperial Vision of Philip II of Spain, The Twenty Second Charles Edmondson Historical Series* (Baylor University, Texas, 2000), pp. 29 – 53, G. Parker, 'The Place of Tudor England in the Messianic Vision of Philip II of Spain', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 12 (2002), pp. 167 – 221.

<sup>57</sup> M. Goldish, 'Patterns in Converso Messianism' in: M. Goldish & R. H. Popkin, *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture, Volume I Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern World* (New York, Springer, 2001), p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> T. McCoog, S. J., *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England, 1589–1597: Building the Faith of Saint Peter Upon the King of Spain's Monarchy* (London, Routledge, 2016), p. 409.

<sup>59</sup> K. A. Kottman, *Law and Apocalypse: The Moral Thought of Luis De León (1527?–1591)* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1972), p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> K. G. C. Newport, *Apocalypse and Millennium: Studies in Biblical Exegesis* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 75.

<sup>61</sup> I. Boxall, *Patmos in the Reception History of the Apocalypse* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 113, p. 148, S. J. Vicchio, *The Legend of the Anti-Christ: A History* (Eugene, Wipf & Stock), p. 220.

<sup>62</sup> F. J. Baumgartner, *Longing For The End: A History of Millennialism in Western Civilisation* (London, Macmillan, 1999), p. 97.

Stuart Clark argues that ‘the Jesuits Robert Bellarmine, Francis Ribera, and Braz Viegas’ recommended ‘Augustine’s caution regarding precise knowledge of such matters, [in order] to deride Lutheran alarmism concerning the Day of Judgement’.<sup>63</sup> This thesis will reconsider Clark’s claim that this meant the adoption of a non-political reading of apocalyptic prophecy.<sup>64</sup> The role of Catholic apocalypticism and eschatology in the French wars of Religion, and especially the St. Bartholomew’s massacre of 1572, has been a topic of intense debate since the publication of Denis Crouzet’s *Les guerriers de Dieu* in 1990. Crouzet stated that his aim in this work was to put religion back in to the French Wars of Religion and attributed much of the conflict to the Catholic apocalyptic understanding of the present.<sup>65</sup> Although Crouzet has faced criticism for perhaps over emphasising the apocalyptic anxiety in his study, as Mack Holt has commented in regards to Denis Crouzet’s work, ‘No analysis of sixteenth-century mentality can now be said to be complete without some reference to this disturbing apocalyptic strain of thought’.<sup>66</sup> The discussion of English Catholic apocalypticism and eschatology offered in this thesis broadens the picture. Did English Catholic interactions with their Continental co-religionists have no impact in regards to the sharing of ideas? Were English Catholics so distinct from their Continental counterparts?

As well as contributing to the historical study of apocalypticism and eschatology, this thesis will add to our understanding of early modern English Catholicism. The works by John Bossy, Christopher Haigh, John Joseph Scarisbrick, Nicholas Tyacke and Eamon Duffy who showed that the Catholic community continued to exist and expand following the Reformation in Britain and that Protestantism was not quickly or completely embraced, opened up the field for a fresh wave of research.<sup>67</sup> Investigations shifted from a concern with the process and extent of the Reformation in England and Catholic survival to questions about the nature of early modern English Catholicism and who should be considered a member of the Catholic

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<sup>63</sup> S. Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 340 – 341.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* p. 341.

<sup>65</sup> D. Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu: la violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525-vers 1610* (Seyssel, Editions Champ Vallon, 2005), p. 45, *passim*.

<sup>66</sup> Mack P. Holt, ‘Review: Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion’, *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Autumn, 1993), p. 535.

<sup>67</sup> J. Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570-1850* (London, Longman, 1975), C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1975), C. Haigh (ed.), *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), C. Haigh, *English Reformations* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993), J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (New York, Basil Blackwell, 1984), N. Tyacke (ed.), *England’s Long Reformation* (London, Routledge, 1998), E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400-1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005).



community. First published in 1993, Alexandra Walsham's *Church Papists* brought hidden and sometimes conformist Catholics back into considerations of early modern English Catholicism and argued that the term 'Catholic' described a much more complex religious group than one composed solely of recusants.<sup>68</sup> Walsham showed that conformity and occasional conformity was a strategic method of survival and constitutes a continuum of attendance into which Catholics could dip in and out and not a stepping stone to full blown recusancy. Michael Questier underscored how Catholicism was not unified, and argued that 'within the apparently rigid constraints of doctrinal formulation and political loyalism, flux in religion was the norm rather than the exception in religious experience, actually expected rather than regarded with astonishment'.<sup>69</sup> On the individual level there was movement back and forth between Protestantism and Catholicism in early modern England. This fluid religious situation was complicated further by the internal struggles within the Catholic community surrounding conformity. Many priests allowed for the necessity of some degree of tactical conformity whereas some adopted, at least on the surface, a position of separation or damnation. Eschatological arguments for separation show how and why a stance of non-conformity may be embraced. Refusal to attend Church of England services was a socially and politically militant stance and challenges the scholarly stress on the political quietness of post-Reformation Catholicism.

Early modern English Catholicism's engagement with or disengagement from politics has been a subject of intense dispute amongst historians. Catholic historians, wishing to protect the reputations of the martyrs of their faith, had generally emphasised the pastoral nature of priestly activities in Protestant England. However, since Patrick McGrath's research on the subject questions have been raised about whether the missionary priests and Jesuits had political objectives.<sup>70</sup> Peter Holmes has argued that there were no distinct groups amongst Elizabethan Catholics with their own separate responses to the political problems of the day' but rather a chronological rhythm to the development of political ideas.<sup>71</sup> Holmes located the high water mark of the political activities of the English Catholics in the 1580s and insisted

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<sup>68</sup> A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 1999).

<sup>69</sup> M. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>70</sup> P. McGrath, *Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I* (London, Blandford Press, 1967).

<sup>71</sup> P. Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 5 – 6.

that the confessional practice of the Elizabethan priests must be placed in the wider context of the policy of the Elizabethan Catholic leaders who aimed to reconvert England ‘through conquest, rebellion, succession or the conversion of the ruling family’.<sup>72</sup> Michael Carrafiello is in agreement with Holmes based on his research on Robert Persons but predates Persons’s ‘single-minded devotion to the overthrow of the English Protestant regime’ to the mid-1570s.<sup>73</sup> Victor Houlston locates the development of Persons’s priorities from missionary to military in reaction to the execution of Edmund Campion in 1581.<sup>74</sup> Houlston points out that Persons still ‘regarded pastoral encouragement and political responsibility as complimentary’.<sup>75</sup> Historical research has also focused on Persons’s friend and fellow force behind the English mission, Cardinal William Allen. Stefania Tutino has identified that Allen was ‘a sort of hinge between the belligerent attitude of Persons and the Jesuits, and less intransigent position of the English secular clergy’.<sup>76</sup> The ‘belligerent attitude’ to which Tutino refers has been the subject of dispute. Thomas McCoog has argued that the mission, and Persons’s outlook, was originally pastoral but that he adopted the objective of overthrowing Elizabeth as a response to the increasing persecution of Catholics.<sup>77</sup> Carrafiello advances an opposite opinion and has argued that the mission was fundamentally political in nature.<sup>78</sup> Robert Scully has posited that the Jesuits had a geographically and socially limited impact because of their reliance on the gentry for protection.<sup>79</sup> This historiographical focus on the political thought of William Allen, Robert Persons and the Jesuits has advanced our understanding but to some extent distracted from the political interactions of the wider Catholic community. This has helped to shape an account that emphasises the loyalty of early modern Catholics to Elizabeth.

However, individuals did change the political circumstances in which the Catholic community lived. Pope Pius V’s excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570, the regime’s execution of Campion in 1581 and the execution of Mary in 1587 all created flash points in

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<sup>72</sup> *ibid.* p. 108.

<sup>73</sup> M. Carrafiello, *Robert Parsons and English Catholicism, 1580-1610* (London, Associated University Presses, 1998), p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> V. Houlston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons’s Jesuit Polemic, 1580 – 1610* (Aldershot, Ashgate 2007), p. 35.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>76</sup> S. Tutino, *Law and Conscience: Catholicism in Early Modern England, 1570-1625* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007), p. 19, fn.30.

<sup>77</sup> T. McCoog, S. J., *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1541-1588* (Leiden, Brill, 1996).

<sup>78</sup> M.L. Carrafiello, ‘English Catholicism and the Jesuit Mission of 1580-1581’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Dec., 1994), p. 761.

<sup>79</sup> Robert E. Scully, S. J., *Into the Lion’s Den: The Jesuit Mission in Elizabethan England and Wales, 1580-1603* (St. Louis, Institute of Jesuit Studies, 2011).

history. The various plots to remove Elizabeth which both helped to create this environment and were a product of it suggest that there was an undercurrent of thought which could encourage action and ideas of disobedience and overthrow. It will be suggested here that these were not necessarily limited to a few key individuals. Some previous historians, including Francis Edwards, have dismissed the challenges to Elizabeth's rule as limited to the actions of a few, unrepresentative, individuals or argued that they were fabricated by the regime to taint Catholicism.<sup>80</sup> As Ethan Shagan has maintained, 'Catholic engagement in politics... should not be a surprise since highly 'political' issues were at the heart of the English Reformation'.<sup>81</sup> Recent studies of Catholic networks have shown that there was both a small minority willing to employ violent means for a spiritual purpose and also a range of ways Catholics challenged Protestant power.<sup>82</sup> Shagan has emphasised how 'People had far more choice available to them than either meek submission or violent resistance, and their choices formed an extended dialogue with the regime'.<sup>83</sup> Work by Peter Lake and Michael Questier has changed the way we view early modern English Catholic agency. Lake and Questier have outlined how the State's persecution of Catholics, and in particular in prisons and at the gallows, opened up spaces for Catholic agency and speech.<sup>84</sup> State-sponsored religious violence energised Catholic resistance rather than crushing the faith. Lake and Questier have highlighted how the crowd attending executions brought their own agenda and ideas about excessive cruelty. Approaching the topic of Catholic political action and dissent through the lens of eschatological thought further highlights the level of dissidence present in early modern English Catholicism and brings to light different ways of understanding political agency. This thesis will question the role of eschatological thought in Catholic confrontation and endurance of religious change and persecution.

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<sup>80</sup> F. Edwards, *Guy Fawkes: The Real Story of the Gunpowder Plot?* (London, Hart-Davis, 1969).

<sup>81</sup> E. Shagan, *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 13.

<sup>82</sup> J. Childs, *God's Traitors: Terror and Faith in England* (London, The Bodley Head, 2014) studies the Vauxes of Harrowden Hall, M. Sena, 'William Blundell and the networks of Catholic dissent in post-Reformation England', in: A. Sheppard & P. Withington, *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 54 - 75 investigates the network of William Blundell of Little Crosby in Lancashire, M. Questier, 'The politics of religious conformity and the accession of James I', *Historical Research*, vol. 71 (1998), pp. 14 - 30 has investigated a group of Yorkshire Catholics, S. Kaushik, 'Resistance, loyalty and recusant politics: Sir Thomas Tresham and the Elizabethan state', *Midland History*, vol. 21 (1996), pp. 32 - 72 has examined Thomas Tresham and his associates.

<sup>83</sup> E. Shagan, *Popular politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 22.

<sup>84</sup> P. Lake & M. Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (London, Yale University Press, 2002).

## **Sources**

This thesis rests on an examination of printed English Catholic sources in its quest to reconstruct early modern English Catholic eschatological thought. This reflects the fact that Catholic eschatology formed part of a discourse with Protestantism and underscores the point that eschatology was a language of political challenge. These sources, although printed clandestinely, circulated in the public sphere.<sup>85</sup> Some Catholic authors went further and either directly responded to or provoked Protestant theologians. As such Catholic texts are not analysed in isolation but in relation to the debates in which they engaged with Protestants in print. Ethan Shagan has emphasised the need to consider the public nature of Catholicism in early modern England and maintains that ‘Scholars have tended to concentrate upon the private, devotional life of Catholics’.<sup>86</sup> Alongside considering how eschatology was publically used by Catholics to challenge Protestantism, manuscripts held in the State Papers have been assessed to analyse the role of eschatology in confronting the power of the State. Accounts of publicly uttered speeches suggest that discontent was expressed in eschatological terms. The once private discussions of Catholic conspirators have been recorded in the State Papers and lists of books and papers expose some of the influences on the thinking of early modern Catholic plotters. An eschatological book of miscellanies has been preserved and reveals what was circulating in Catholic underground networks. These sources show that Catholic disobedience had an eschatological edge.

## **Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis will begin by considering English Catholic devotional eschatology as it provided the foundation for an eschatological worldview. Eschatological prayers and meditations provided a link for shifting from contemplation of the individual Judgement one would face to considering the collective judgement as human life was set in an eschatological time-frame and the idea of having to give an account to God was emphasised. The idea of a coming apocalypse was a source of consolation as well as trepidation as it meant that justice would be restored. The second chapter will consider how early modern English Catholics developed an idea that

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<sup>85</sup> The public nature of Catholic confrontation of Protestantism in England has been studied by P. Lake & M. Questier, ‘Puritans, Papists, and the “Public Sphere” in Early Modern England: The Edmund Campion Affair in Context’, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 2000), pp. 587 – 627.

<sup>86</sup> E. Shagan, *Catholics and the ‘Protestant Nation’: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 16.

the Protestant Church was the eschatological False Church predicted to emerge before the End and how these ideas fed into the argument for separation from protestants. Building on this notion that the Reformation was an eschatological sign, the third chapter will analyse how Catholics approached the identification of Antichrist. This thesis will then investigate how in parallel to the concern with the identification of Antichrist, Elizabeth was considered to be Jezebel, the Whore of the Apocalypse. This eschatological worldview and understanding of the Reformation, Antichrist and Elizabeth encouraged action. This thesis will explore two types of Catholic agency which were shaped by an eschatological understanding of the present. The fifth chapter will examine how eschatology contributed to Catholic plots and prophecy and thereby contributed to challenging the regime. The sixth chapter will investigate the idea that Catholic eschatology encouraged a militant passivity in the face of persecution and question whether we need to reconsider ideas about early modern Catholic agency.



## **1: Devotional Eschatology**

Devotional eschatology was ordinary and pervasive. It provided a bridge for moving from ideas of the individual Judgement one would face to notions of the collective Judgement. This enabled, despite what some historians have said, Catholics to sometimes think in a historicist way about the apocalypse.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the four last things flourished in the Middle Ages and fostered an everyday expectation that individual sinners would face God at the Last Judgement. This background eschatology persisted in Elizabethan culture, amongst both Catholics and Protestants alike, and provided ‘a lens through which experience and change were viewed’.<sup>2</sup> Devotional eschatology provides the starting point for this thesis as it was the foundation stone of individual eschatological understanding of the past, present and future. Earthly life was set in an eschatological time-frame and the idea of giving an account to God was emphasised by early modern Catholics due to the focus on good works being necessary for salvation. The idea of a coming apocalypse was a source of comfort as well as terror as it meant that justice would be restored. The Protestant denial of Purgatory and of the ability of those on earth to aid the souls of the departed towards heaven severed the traditional link between the living and the dead, which also created a more acute focus on the final account each individual must give to God. This chapter will briefly summarise the tradition of the four last things and the importance of Sir Thomas More for the transmission of this tradition to the Elizabethan Catholic community. This chapter will consider the eschatology present in Robert Persons’s *First booke of Christian exercise* and what this can tell us about the devotional landscape. This chapter will then examine the apocalyptic motivation of Richard Hopkins’s 1582 translation of Luis De Granada and what this reveals about early modern Catholic apocalypticism. Lastly, this chapter will look at the manuscript of Philip Howard’s *Pathe to Paradise* and the edition transcribed by Peter Mowle and what this can add to our understanding of Catholic devotional eschatology.

### **The Middle Ages and Early Reformation**

Elizabethan England inherited a rich tradition of considering the end of human life from the Middle Ages which was an era absorbed with the four last things and how to die well. The four

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<sup>1</sup> K. G. C. Newport, *Apocalypse and Millennium: Studies in Biblical Eisegesis* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> C. Walker Bynum and P. Freedman (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 4.

last things were death, heaven, hell and Judgement Day and it was the consideration of Judgement which linked eschatology to apocalypticism. As Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman have argued, ‘although the topic of apocalypticism was previously sometimes equated with the history of specific prophetic movements, literary historians have long treated it as a discernible element in medieval thought generally’.<sup>3</sup> Margaret Aston has argued that ‘Fears of the hereafter provided an ever-present sanction for daily morality’ and that ‘the four last things loomed over people in and out of church, in mural paintings, on preachers’ lips, [and] in devotional handbooks’.<sup>4</sup> Pre-reformation English churches often depicted images of death, Judgement, heaven and hell on either the Chancel arch above the altar or the west wall of the church so that this was the last image to be seen by the congregation before leaving. This expectation and focus on the afterlife was compounded by yearly cycles of morality and mystery plays and the *Ars Morendi* tradition informing the literate about how to die well. Thoughts upon the destination of one’s soul did not abate when the Reformation white-washed Doom paintings in churches and the cycle of plays ceased. The tradition of the four last things, and the subsequent devotional eschatology it promoted, has been investigated in regards to the Middle Ages and Elizabethan Protestants but a gap in research remains surrounding the tradition and Catholics in Elizabethan England. As David Cressy has concluded, ‘Far from fading with the Reformation, the medieval *ars moriendi*... enjoyed a lively revival under Elizabeth’.<sup>5</sup> Reformers and conservative clergy walked a careful tightrope between paying reverence to the dead and soothing community grief while not insinuating that earthly prayers could alter the final destination of the departed. A change occurred between the Middle Ages and the Elizabethan period and the *Ars Moriendi* transformed into the *Ars Vivendi* and became a manual to read not just at death but throughout life in preparation.<sup>6</sup> The Dutch Humanist and friend of Thomas More, Desiderius Erasmus, was key in this alteration and Himler M. Pabel has claimed that Erasmus’s ‘*De praeparatione ad mortem* mediated in humanist form the late medieval Catholic pastoral care for the dying to the sixteenth century’.<sup>7</sup> In his research into

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<sup>3</sup> C. Walker Bynum and P. Freedman (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> M. Aston, ‘Death’ in: R. Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> D. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 389.

<sup>6</sup> C. M. N. Eire, ‘*Ars Moriendi*’ in: G. S. Wakefield (ed.), *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1983), p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> H. M. Pabel, ‘Humanism and Early Modern Catholicism: Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *Ars Moriendi*’ in: K. M. Comerford & H. M. Pabel (eds.), *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O’Malley, S. J.*, (London, University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 35.



Protestant apocalypticism Brian W. Ball has emphasised the importance of the doctrine of last things in creating and sustaining a mental structure on which divergent eschatologies were built. Ball has argued that ‘Before the millenarianism and Fifth Monarchism of the mid-seventeenth century, contemporary with them, and long after them, there existed such a moderate doctrine of the last things which focused primarily on belief in Christ’s second coming’.<sup>8</sup> This has been examined in respect to early modern Protestants but still requires exploration in regards to early modern Catholics.

### **1570s**

One way in which the English Catholic tradition of the four last things was transmitted to Elizabethan Catholics and sustained in popularity was via the publication of Sir Thomas More’s ‘A Treatyce (unfynished) upon these words of holye Scripture.... Remember the last thynges, and thou shalt never synne’, written in 1522. William Rastell included it in his *The workes of Sir Thomas More Knyght, sometye Lorde Chauncellour of England, wrytten by him in the Englysh tonge* of 1557. The works of Thomas More provided guidance and comfort to the Elizabethan English Catholic community which venerated More as a saint of the Reformation. As a vocal opponent of Protestantism, More was executed in 1535 for refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy. More’s treatise upon the last things focused on the consideration of death, judgement and reward or punishment as ‘An instrument to pull out the weeds of the soul’.<sup>9</sup> More proposed that ‘the diligent remembrance of all four’ would assist in ‘avoiding of all the ... assaults of the three mortal enemies, the devil, the world and our own flesh’.<sup>10</sup> Remembering the four last things in this life was proposed as a practical tool to guide the believer towards salvation. However, More did not include descriptions of the apocalypse, heaven or hell in his text but applies ‘this medicine’ to the sins of pride, ‘the mother of all vice’, envy, wrath, covetise, gluttony and finally sloth.<sup>11</sup> More’s treatise, as explained in Rastell’s 1557 edition, remained unfinished and we do not know what More would have added to the text. More’s proposal that the ‘the diligent remembrance of all four’ last things is suggestive that More intended to add a description of the judgement of God. More’s argument in *A dialogue of*

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<sup>8</sup> B. W. Ball, *Great Expectations: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden, Brill, 1975), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Sir Thomas More, *The Four Last Things*, D. O’Connor (ed.) (London, Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1935), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 46, p. 37.

*Comfort*, which was printed in 1573 by the exiled Catholic scholar John Fowler, indicated that it was likely that if the treatise on the four last things was finished it would have included a lengthy description of the Judgement. More argued that ‘in any sicke man it doth more harm than good, withdrawing him in time of syckenesse, with looking and longing for life, from the meditation of death, judgement, heaven and hell, whereof he should besette much part of his time, even al his whole life in his best health’.<sup>12</sup> Alongside the consideration of the four last things, apocalypticism was an important thread through More’s *Dialogue of Comfort*. More claimed that ‘(as our Savior prophesied of the people of Jerusalem) many wish among us already before the peril to come, that the mountains would overhelme them, or the valies open, and swallow them up and cover them’.<sup>13</sup> More was quoting Jesus’s warning to the people of Jerusalem contained in Luke 23:30 and a theme repeated in Apocalypse 6:16. It is not only More’s words which are significant but the reprinting of them in 1573 by John Fowler, one of the most prolific English Catholic publishers of the 1560s and 1570s.<sup>14</sup> Fowler worked from the continent for the cause of re-converting England to Catholicism through both devotional and polemical texts. It may be significant that Fowler chose an eschatologically framed treatise for this task. Another possible indication of the direction More’s treatise could have taken if finished is the work of his friend and fellow martyr under Henry VIII, John Fisher.

The similarities between the thinking of More and Fisher may help to illuminate the direction More would have taken if he had completed his treatise. Fisher was a Cambridge academic and Bishop of Rochester who resisted both Henry VIII’s divorce and his title of ‘Supreme Head of the Church of England’. Fisher was tried for treason and decapitated on 22 June 1535 on Tower Hill, instantly gaining the status of a martyr in the eyes of Catholic Europe. Fisher and More were friends and committed to both Catholicism and humanism. Both were imprisoned in the Tower of London and martyred for the same cause. James Monti has claimed that More’s friendship with Bishop John Fisher is of particular interest because of the

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<sup>12</sup> T. More, *A dialogue of cumfort against tribulation, made by the right vertuous, wise and learned man, Sir Thomas More, sometime L. Chancellor of England, which he wrote in the Tower of London, An. 1534* (Antwerp, John Fowler, 1573), sig. Av.

<sup>13</sup> T. More, *A dialogue of cumfort against tribulation* (Antwerp, John Fowler, 1573), p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> P. Arblaster, ‘Fowler, John (1537–1579)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10009>>  
[Accessed 10 Nov 2014].

‘numerous intellectual and spiritual parallels between the two’ of them.<sup>15</sup> Fisher’s text was written as a letter to his half-sister Elizabeth White while he was awaiting his execution and was concerned with preparing to die. Fisher recommended that

when you shall reade this meditation, devise in your mynde... all the conditions of a man or woman sodaynly taken and ravyshed by death: and thynke wyth your selfe that ye were in the same condition so hastily taken... and your soule depart hence, & leave your mortall bodie, never to returne again for to make any amendes, or to doe any release to your soule after this houre.<sup>16</sup>

The theme of the uncertainty and potentially short nature of human life was an enduring one and will be discussed later in this chapter. The text recommended prayer, devotion and meditation to lead a virtuous life while keeping in mind that one may not have time to repent sins as one does not know the hour of one’s death. When the letter was published in 1578 by the Catholic printer William Carter it was set in an eschatological framework. This was achieved by Carter’s attachment of an apocalyptic sermon by Fisher at the end of the text. The sermon was on Ezekiel’s lamentations applied to Christ’s passion and Fisher claimed that ‘there is no maner of sinne that we doe, but it is written in the booke of our conscie[n]ce. And if we repent us not of the same... thys booke of our conscience shal be shewed against us in y<sup>e</sup> dreadfull day of judgement’.<sup>17</sup> Fisher placed the human life in an eschatological time frame and focused earthly devotion and repentance on the Day of Judgement. Fisher continued that

if y[o]u amende not thy life... thou shalt suffer for thine owne sinne in hell, thou shalte suffer a more gréevous tormentry then [Christ] dyd... For as it is sayd in the Apocalipses... the smoke of the tormentries of that place shall ascende by innumerable worlds, that is to say without ende.<sup>18</sup>

Fisher was directly quoting Apocalypse 14 and placed the reference in the margin to underscore how the events revealed to John should be kept in mind during earthly life. Fisher adopted a

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<sup>15</sup> J. Monti, *The King’s Good Servant But God’s First: The Life and Writings of Saint Thomas More* (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1997), p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> J. Fisher, *A spirituall consolation, written by John Fysshier Bishoppe of Rochester, to hys sister Elizabeth, at suche tyme as hee was prisoner in the Tower of London. Very necessary, and commodious for all those that mynde to leade a vertuous lyfe: also to admonishe them, to be at all tymes prepared to dye, and seemeth to bee spoken in the person of one that was sodainly preve[n]ted by death* (London, W. Carter, 1578), sig. Aiiv.

<sup>17</sup> J. Fisher, *A spirituall consolation* (London, W. Carter, 1578), sig. Hiiv – Hiiir.

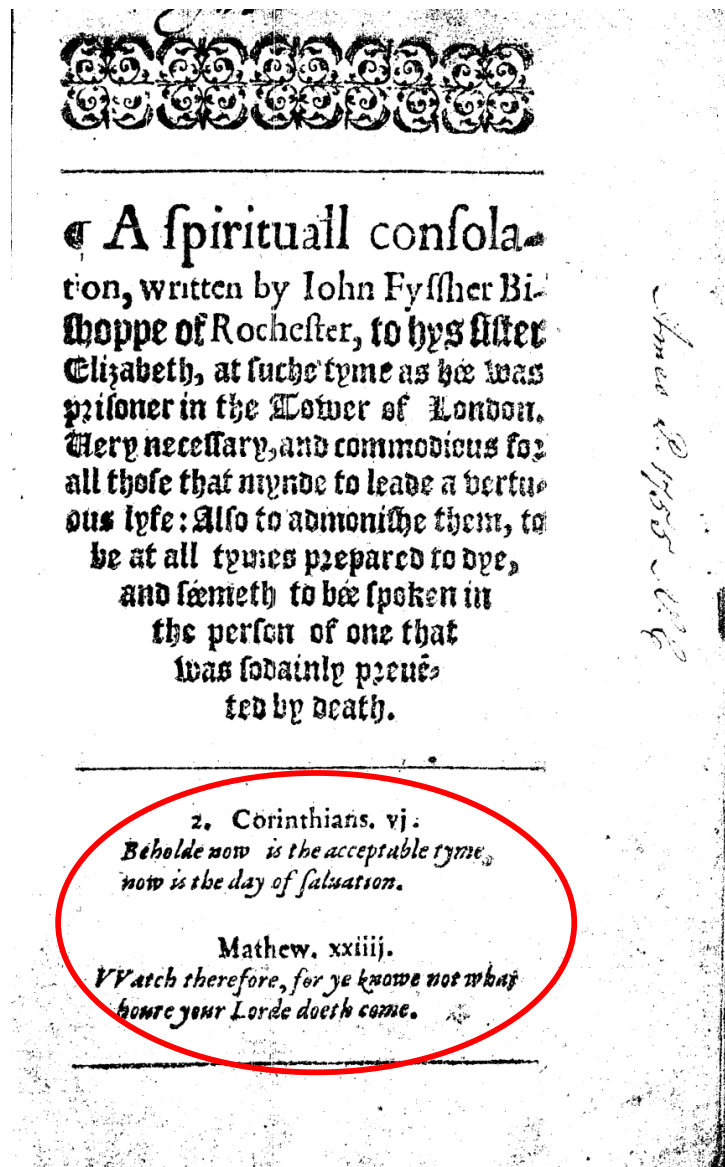
<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, sig. H8v.

Christocentric approach. However he did not present Christ's suffering as redeeming the individual's sins like William Caxton had done in the 1490s but suggested that the passion provided an example of the suffering each individual would endure if they did not repent.<sup>19</sup> The work although claiming to be a '*A spirituall consolation*' does not console but concentrates on sin, damnation and the pains of hell while the role of prayer and devotion in avoiding this eternal outcome is emphasised. The status of both Fisher and More was important for how deeply devotional consideration of the last things and God's Judgement ran in early modern English Catholicism. Both More and Fisher were venerated in early modern popular Catholic culture as Reformation saints and both More and Fisher provided the archetype for resisting the monarch's authority over spiritual matters and loyalty to Rome. Once again, the devotional is difficult to separate from the political.

Eschatology was present on the 1578 title page William Carter had produced for Fisher's work.

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<sup>19</sup> W. Caxton, *Here begynneth a lytyll treatyse schortely compyled and called ars moriendi that is to saye the craft for to deye for the helthe of mannes sowle* (Westminster, William Caxton, 1491), sig. A5r.

Figure 1.<sup>20</sup>

Quoting 2 Corinthians vi ('Beholde now is the acceptable tyme, now is the day of salvation') and Mathew xxiiiij ('Watch therefore, for ye know not what houre your Lorde doeth come') placed the work in an apocalyptic interpretive framework and made a comment on Carter's contemporary age. The passage 'Beholde now is the acceptable tyme, now is the day of salvation' is striking in its temporal specifity and suggests that by observing current events –

<sup>20</sup> J. Fisher, *A spirituall consolation, written by John Fysshier Bishoppe of Rochester, to hys sister Elizabeth, at suche tyme as hee was prisoner in the Tower of London. Very necessary, and commodious for all those that mynde to leade a vertuous lyfe: also to admonishe them, to be at all tymes prepared to dye, and seemeth to bee spoken in the person of one that was sodainly preve[n]ted by death* (London, W. Carter, 1578), title page.

‘Beholde’ – one could see that ‘now is the day of salvation’. Resistance and personal resolve was encouraged in the quotation from Matthew 24 which stressed the uncertainty of the date of the apocalypse but insisted that it was looming. Carter was an important figure in sustaining the Catholic cause and the date of publication of this text is significant. Carter was the secretary to Nicholas Harpsfield until his death in 1575 when Carter inherited his manuscripts and became involved in a clandestine press alongside John Lyon at the instigation of George Gilbert and Stephen Brinkley.<sup>21</sup> Carter would eventually be executed in 1584 for printing Gregory Martin’s *Treatise of Schisme* and because the paragraph on Judith and Holofernes was interpreted by the regime as an encouragement to a lady at court to assassinate Elizabeth. The *Treatise of Schisme* was printed by Carter in the same year as Fisher’s *Spirituell consolation* and thus both texts were directed at the same ends, the reconversion of England to Catholicism. Both genres, polemical and devotional, were intended to fill the role of priestly guidance as it became increasingly difficult to access Catholic priests in Elizabethan England.

### **Robert Persons, *First booke of the Christian exercise***

One work which was created to address the problem of accessing Catholic religious instruction and guidance in England was Robert Persons’s *First booke of the Christian exercise*. Persons’s *First booke of the Christian exercise* printed in Rouen in 1582 was both a highly regarded work of devotional instruction and highly eschatological. The popularity of Persons works means that analysing this text can tell us a lot about the devotional landscape in early modern England. Forty editions were produced between 1582 and 1640 and Edmund Bunny produced a Protestant adaptation in 1584 thereby transmitting it to an even wider audience.<sup>22</sup> Thomas McCoog has cautioned that although the *Christian exercise* had a universal appeal that ‘does not mean that it was confessionally neutral, and therefore open to appropriation without being substantially disfigured’.<sup>23</sup> Persons, who was one of the leaders of the Jesuit mission to England in 1580, was dedicated to the reconversion of England and was a figure who combined the

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<sup>21</sup> I. Gadd, ‘Carter, William (b. in or before 1549, d. 1584)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4802>>  
[Accessed 18 Nov 2015].

<sup>22</sup> The popularity of Persons’s *First booke of the Christian exercise* is summarized by V. Houlston’s in his introduction to his edition, particularly p. xi. S.J. Robert Persons, *The Christian Directory* (1582), V. Houlston (ed.) (Brill, Leiden, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> T. McCoog, *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits: Essays in Celebration of the First Centenary of Campion Hall* (Oxford, Boydell and Brewer, 1996), p. 160.

political and the pastoral. Persons's physical presence in England may have been brief but his *Christian exercise* had a lasting impact. The Jesuit missionary John Gerard claimed that Persons's *Christian exercise* had 'converted more souls to God than it contains pages'.<sup>24</sup> The *Christian exercise* was explicitly not a part of Persons's long written campaign of controversial literature and marked a tactical change. Persons claimed that 'albeit books of controversie be in this age necessarie for maintayninge of our faith: yet books of devotion are more profitable to pietie'.<sup>25</sup> Persons undertook this work almost immediately after fleeing to France following his mission to England and thus had fresh in his mind a good idea of what the Catholic community in England required to encourage and sustain them. Persons would also have gained a better understanding of the difficulty of priestly mission work in England following the execution of his missionary companion, Edmund Campion, in 1581 and the subsequent necessity for texts to assist in the priestly pastoral role.<sup>26</sup>

Similar to Thomas More and John Fisher, Persons used the four last things to encourage Catholic zeal. Person claimed that these mysteries of faith were not digested well in people's hearts and that if the four last things were properly considered people would be more resolute in serving God.<sup>27</sup> Persons reasoned that

surely if my soule or anye other dyd co[n]sider attentyvelye but a few thinges... shee could not butt speedlie reforme hir selfe... As.. if she co[n]sidered thorowghly.. that shee must geeve accompt at the last daye of every ydle worde, & yet that shee maketh none accompt not onely of words but also nor of evyll deedes.<sup>28</sup>

Victor Houlston has argued that Persons adapted the Dominican friar and author Luis de Granada's work to an Ignatian scheme.<sup>29</sup> However Thomas McCoog has claimed that *The first*

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<sup>24</sup> J. Gerard, *The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, trans. P. Caraman (London, Longmans, Greene & Co., 1959), p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> R. Persons, *The first booke of the Christian exercise appertaining to resolution. Wherein are layed downe the causes & reasons that should move a man to resolve hym selfe to the service of God: and all the impedimenetes removes, which may let the same* (Rouen, Fr. Person's Press, 1582), sig. A3r.

<sup>26</sup> A. Walsham, 'Domme Preachers'? Post - Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print', *Past & Present*, No. 168 (Aug., 2000), pp. 72 – 123.

<sup>27</sup> R. Persons, *The first booke of the Christian exercise appertaining to resolution. Wherein are layed downe the causes & reasons that should move a man to resolve hym selfe to the service of God: and all the impedimenetes removes, which may let the same* (Rouen, Fr. Person's Press, 1582), p. 18, p. 19.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>29</sup> V. Houlston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons's Jesuit Polemic, 1580 – 1610* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007), p. 33.

*booke of the Christian exercise* ‘is neither a translation nor an adaptation of [Luis de Granada’s] *The Sinner’s Guide*’ and that ‘the crucial difference lies in the urgency of Persons’s argument, the greater concentration on the immediate conversion of his reader, and the unremitting psychological pressure he brings to bear’.<sup>30</sup> The differences between Granada and Persons’s treatment of the four last things becomes clearer in the structure of Persons’s work. Persons brought consideration of the Day of Judgement forward whereas Luis De Granada began by stressing the nature of God’s goodness. Although both works consider the apocalypse and Judgement, and Persons is certainly indebted to Luis de Granada, Persons’s text, because of its structure, has a more apocalyptic tone.

The first part of Persons’s *Christian exercise* was concerned with the apocalypse and suggests that consideration of this was the prime means that a Christian would come to a resolution to serve God. Persons claimed that in the first part it ‘shalbe layed downe all the principall reason[n]s that ought to move a man to this resolution’.<sup>31</sup> The book was structured to include introductions explaining the necessity and purpose of the work and that Christianity should be split into the theological and practical, while a proper understanding of the former would lead to the correct practice of the latter. Persons then moved to an in depth consideration of the apocalypse and the account each individual would have to give to God. This was followed by a reflection on the events of the hour of death, the pains of hell and lastly the rewards to be gained by service to God. Houliston has argued that the *Christian exercise* represents how ‘Persons wanted to raise the Catholic community from inertia to living faith, where Catholic truth would inform a godly nation’.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, McCoog has claimed that the *Christian exercise* was published ‘not to correct but to complement the works of controversy’ and has emphasised that Persons wanted to create and sustain a willingness to suffer for the faith amongst English Catholics, something Persons combined with an ‘unmitigating assault on lukewarmness’.<sup>33</sup> As Patrick Collinson has argued, ‘Much Catholic devotional literature was not quite what it professed to be, and followed a double agenda. There was a hidden polemical intention, not only to nourish the piety of the faithful but to define the distinct

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<sup>30</sup> T. McCoog, *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits: Essays in Celebration of the First Centenary of Campion Hall* (Oxford, Boydell and Brewer, 1996) p. 166.

<sup>31</sup> R. Persons, *The first booke of the Christian exercise* (Rouen, Fr. Person’s Press, 1582), sig. Av.

<sup>32</sup> V. Houliston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons’s Jesuit Polemic, 1580 – 1610* (Aldershot, Ashgate 2007), p. 38.

<sup>33</sup> T. McCoog, *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits: Essays in Celebration of the First Centenary of Campion Hall* (Oxford, Boydell and Brewer, 1996) p. 163.



existence of the Catholic community'.<sup>34</sup> This may suggest that Persons thought that devotional consideration of the apocalypse would result in personal action.

Persons's *Christian exercise* is saturated with eschatology and used it as a powerful tool of conversion and devotion. Eschatology is present from the introduction through chapters one, two, three and four but really becomes the central focus in chapters five, six and seven. Chapter five is devoted to how all Christians should consider 'what accounte we shalbe demaunded... in what manner: by whome: with what severitie: with what danger of punishment, if we be founde negligent'.<sup>35</sup> Following descriptions of the public nature of the account of every action and the subsequent severity of judgement and ability of God to damn people to everlasting punishments chapter six explains why God will not be merciful. Persons's idea of the fury of the Lord at the Day of Judgement is another strand woven throughout the *Christian exercise*. In part I, chapter I, Persons argued that 'he that wilfully resistethe the good motions of the holy ghost and uncurteouslie contemnethe his Lorde knocking at the doore of his conscience greatly provokethe the indignation of God against hym', referencing Apocalypse 3 in the margin.<sup>36</sup> In the context of the English mission this could be an instruction that he who ignored the Jesuit message of non-conformity and the necessity of the Catholic Church for salvation would be damned and punished for eternity. Persons produced a lengthy discussion of examples of God's punishment from biblical history. The reader was to

consider the sharpe execution used by God upon offenders of [God's] law, bothe before it was writen and synce: we shall fynde greate cause of feare also, as the wounderfull punisheme[n]t upon Adam & so manye millions of people besydes, for his one fault: the drowning of all the worlde together: the burninge of Sodome and Gomorra with brimstone: the reprobation of Saul: the extreme chastisement of David: and the like. Which all beinge done by God with suche rigour for lesse & fewer synnes than ours are, & allso uppon them whome he had more cause to spare than he hath to tolerance with us.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> P. Collinson, 'Literature and the Church', in: D. Lowenstein & J. Mueller (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 397.

<sup>35</sup> R. Persons, *The first booke of the Christian exercise* (Rouen, Fr. Person's Press, 1582), p. 46.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 48.

This was not a work of comfort or consolation but one intended to strike fear into the reader and produce change. These considerations could suggest that the punishments for Catholicism threatened by the state would pale in comparison to the punishments of God. Without explicitly stating it, non-conformity could have been presented as the only option for English Catholics to avoid damnation and thus devotional apocalypticism may have been used to encourage disobedience.

Catholic devotional literature blurred the boundaries between the devotional and controversial as it challenged the teachings of the established Church in England. Persons claimed that ‘at the last daye of judgement Christ shall saye to the damned, because you clothed me not, fed me not, and did not other deedes of charitie... therefore goe you to everlasting fire’.<sup>38</sup> Persons used the consideration of the Judgement of God to teach that Christians must both flee from sin and do good works. This contrasted with the growing Calvinist influence in the Church of England which proposed salvation through faith alone and that one’s fate was already predestined. Persons expanded on this contrasting means to salvation and claimed that good works alone were still not enough to ensure salvation. The role of the Catholic Church in guiding men and women to heaven was emphasised when Persons asked ‘whoe coulde eate or drinke, or sleepe quietlie in his bedd untill by the holye sacrament of penance, he had discharged his conscience of mortall synne?’ for fear of the sudden oncoming of the General Judgement.<sup>39</sup> Three different sections of the text amounted to a challenge to the Protestant tenet of salvation through *sola fide* while presenting the Catholic Church as the only means to heaven. Ideas about Judgement Day in devotional texts thus presented doctrinal challenges to the regime.

Persons added a sense of urgency to the reformation of the individual in his consideration of the apocalyptic ends of humanity. He did this by considering the perilous and short nature of human life rather than predicting the swift arrival of the day of General Judgement. Persons asked the reader

What wise man then would but feare... a litle stone fallinge from the  
howse upon his head, or his horse stumblinge under him as he rydeth,

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<sup>38</sup> R. Persons, *The first booke of the Christian exercise* (Rouen, Fr. Person’s Press, 1582), p. 35.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 84.

or his enymie meetinge hym on the highe waye... or ten thowsande chaunces besydes (wherof he standeth dailie and howerlye in daunger) may ridd him of this lyfe and put hym in that case, as no creature of this world, nor anye continuance of time shalbe able to delyver hym thence againe And whoe then wolde not feare? whoe wolde not tremble? <sup>40</sup>

Persons thus placed the human life in an eschatological time frame without predicting the date of the apocalypse. This is an example of a major difference between Protestant and Catholic works of this period even though both often had the same aim of encouraging repentance and discouraging sin. This could have been a tactical difference on the part of Persons who wished Catholics to keep the end of this life permanently in mind. Discussing the death of the individual also would have made the message of the text much more immediate because it is easier to think of the unknowable certainty of one's own death and daily risks than it is to understand the mysteries of the faith. Or it could have been with the Biblical prohibitions on predicting the date of the End, such as those contained in Matthew 24:36, Mark 13:32, Acts 1:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5, in mind that Persons declined to do so. Maybe most importantly it would not have been in keeping with the genre to predict the End. Persons was writing a devotional work which considered in general the account each individual must make to God in order to help guide the reader to a resolution to change their behaviour. Devotional apocalypticism may focus on the inescapable nature of the Day of Judgement but the time for repentance and alteration is determined by the hazardous nature of human life not the date of the End.

### **Richard Hopkins's Epistle**

Richard Hopkins's English translation of Luis De Granada's *Of Prayer and Meditation* was concerned with time and was apocalyptically inspired. Although Hopkins may be at one extreme of the apocalyptic spectrum which existed in the Elizabethan Catholic community, his translation is not out of place in the devotional landscape. Hopkins studied at Magdalen College Oxford and entered the Middle Temple in 1560 but by around 1569 Hopkins went into exile in Louvain to escape Protestantism. Hopkins studied in Spain making strong connections to the crown and returned to Louvain by 1579 becoming a close associate of William Allen and

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<sup>40</sup> R. Persons, *The first booke of the Christian exercise* (Rouen, Fr. Person's Press, 1582), p. 84.

Thomas Harding.<sup>41</sup> Hopkins's role in the exile community, with Spain and with William Allen makes his apocalyptic outlook all the more significant. Hopkins declared in the preface that 'we have good cause to feare, leaste that terrible time appocheth nowe verie neare at hande, which our saviour forewarned us in the gospel, to wit: that at his comminge to judge he should hardelie finde faithe in the earthe'.<sup>42</sup> Hopkins made it apparent that he believed the apocalypse was impending and based this verdict on the rise of Protestantism and the spiritual peril in which this 'heresy' placed all Christians. Hopkins claimed that 'THE holye Scriptures affirme in divers places, that the nearer we approche towards the comminge of Antichriste, and the ende of the worlde, the more perilous will the tymes be for all Christians'.<sup>43</sup> This rise of heresy was the result of Satan, who fearing the end of the world, 'knowinge that then his tyrannous kingdome... will have an ende... extendeth the uttermoste of his rage against all faithfull Christians, and assaulteth them dailie... with divers wilie temptatio[n]s, and terrible persecutions, to procure them thereby to folowe his most wicked rebellious example'.<sup>44</sup> This translation was made against the backdrop of the 1581 Act which made reconciliation to the Catholic Church treason and the execution of Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin and Alexander Briant which sent shockwaves through the Catholic communities in Europe. Hopkins was also in exile during the time of his translation and this could have had an impact upon his perception of the ability for Catholics to reside in England while maintaining their faith. This, alongside the role of persecution in the Apocalypse, may explain the focus on persecutions and assaults to convert Catholics to 'his most wicked rebellious example', but we also find woven into this dedication the perception that conformity or conversion could bring social and political advancement in the form of 'divers wilie temptatio[n]s'. This may be a reference to Hopkins's own personal experience as the dedication itself suggests. Hopkins dedicated his translation to the senior members of the four Inns of Court in London and this targeting of the legal profession may not only show where Hopkins believed power lay in England, but reflect Hopkins's

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<sup>41</sup> G. Martin Murphy, 'Hopkins, Richard (b. c.1546, d. in or before 1596)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13752>>

[Accessed 10 Nov 2015].

<sup>42</sup> Luis de Granada, *Of prayer, and meditation Wherein are contained fovyrtien deuoute meditations for the seuen daies of the weeke, bothe for the morninges, and eueninges. And in them is treyted of the consideration of the principall holie mysteries of our faithe. Written firste in the Spanishe tongue by the famous religious father. F. Lewis de Granada, prouinciall of the holie order of preachers in the prouince of Portugall.* (Paris, Thomas Brumeau, at the signe of the Olyue, 1582), sig. a.iiij.2r.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, sig. a.iij.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

personal background due to his connection with the Middle Temple which he had left in 1566 after becoming 'wearied with the heresy'.<sup>45</sup>

Hopkins's predictions of the looming apocalypse were not just based on his experience of the present but are also thoroughly rooted in his knowledge of the Bible. The margin directed the reader to 'Dan 9.11 &12, Matt. 24, Marc 13, Luc 21, 2 Thess. 2, 1 Tim. 4, 2 Tim. 3. 2 Peter. 2, Apoc. 11.12 &13'.<sup>46</sup> This in-depth relation of the present state of affairs in England to biblical predictions of the End is also noteworthy for the chapters of the Apocalypse which Hopkins references. The parts of the Apocalypse Hopkins drew from ran sequentially and could point towards where in the apocalyptic time-line Hopkins perceived the world to be. Apocalypse 11 describes how the earthly court was cast out of the temple and that the gentiles would tread the holy city under foot while Apocalypse 12 relates the story of the woman clothed in the sun who is attacked by the dragon, often interpreted to be Satan, who persecuted the faithful after the woman had escaped. Apocalypse 13 is particularly interesting as it is at this point during the vision that the beast seduced those that lived on earth to either worship the image of the beast or die. Those that followed the beast were to be marked and the end of the chapter relates how no man may take part in economic activity unless they carried the mark of the beast. This may give us an insight into how Hopkins understood his present and why he viewed exile as the best, if not only, option. Hopkins may have felt that he and other Catholics suffered exclusion from society and options which would have previously been available to them because of their faith. Hopkins's focus on Apocalypse 11-13 also places the world just a little over half-way through the apocalyptic drama which was recorded in 22 chapters. This underlines the point of the translation as a means to help the faithful navigate through the testing times to come.

Hopkins adopted a historicist approach to the Apocalypse and translated Luis De Granada's text to help Catholics to salvation during the apocalyptic upheavals the immediate

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<sup>45</sup> G. Martin Murphy, 'Hopkins, Richard (b. c.1546, d. in or before 1596)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13752>>  
[Accessed 2 Oct 2015].

<sup>46</sup> Luis de Granada, *Of prayer, and meditation* (Paris, Thomas Brumeau, at the signe of the Olyue, 1582), sig.aijr.

future was promised to bring. Historicism interpreted current events as fulfilling the prophecy of the Apocalypse.<sup>47</sup> Hopkins declared his

intent that all Christians might be more circumspecte, and stre[n]gthened,  
to resiste faithfullye against all Satans wylle deceytfull temptation[n]s  
in this **our daungerous age, approching so neare towards the  
comminge of Antichriste, and the ende of the worlde (as by manye  
conjecturall signes it seemeth)** a holye Angell hath forewarned us  
hereof verye preciselye in the revelacions of S. Jhon.<sup>48</sup>

These ‘conjecturall signs’ could refer to prodigies and portents or be extended to the rise of Protestantism and its gaining of political power.<sup>49</sup> A pronounced apocalypticism clearly underscored the production of this text. This challenges Kenneth Newport’s assessment of Catholic apocalypticism in this period, that the Catholic ‘response [to Protestant apocalypticism] came in three basic forms: preterism, futurism, and “counter-historicism”’.<sup>50</sup> Newport did claim that ‘There is also a fourth method of approach, that of the ‘idealist school, which suggests that the book is to be read as a symbolic account of the battle between good and evil’, however this also does not fit with Hopkins’s epistle.<sup>51</sup> Hopkins was not a preterist in that he did not consider that some events predicted in the Apocalypse had happened in the first centuries of Christianity. Neither did Hopkins advance a futurist interpretation through placing all the events of the Apocalypse in a distant future time. The idea that only Protestants had a historicist understanding of the Apocalypse in this period, which meant that only Protestants applied the prophecy of the Apocalypse to historical events, has been an enduring one. Robin Barnes has argued that although ‘various forms of collective expectancy remained alive in the Roman tradition... Catholic eschatology remained on the whole less oriented to the historical horizon, more individualised and spiritualised than prevailing Protestant outlooks’.<sup>52</sup> Barnes continued to claim that ‘In Catholic preaching, the hope of salvation was less a matter of watching and waiting [and] more a matter of nursing here and now at the breast of Holy Mother Church’.<sup>53</sup> Apocalypticism, particularly a historicist understanding, is frequently

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<sup>47</sup> Historicism is defined in the introduction, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Luis de Granada, *Of prayer, and meditation*, sig. aijv, emboldening mine.

<sup>49</sup> Protestantism as a sign that Antichrist will emerge is discussed in chapter, pp. 102 – 116.

<sup>50</sup> K. G. C. Newport, *Apocalypse and Millenium: Studies in Biblical Exegesis* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 68 – 69.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>52</sup> R. B. Barnes, ‘Eschatology, Apocalypticism, and the Antichrist’, in: D. M. Whitford (ed.), *T& T Clark Companion to Reformation Theology* (London, T & T Clark, 2012), p. 249.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

portrayed as an exclusively Protestant tradition. Avihu Zakai has argued that ‘By the end of the Elizabethan period, the English were convinced by the arguments of the Protestant apocalyptic tradition’.<sup>54</sup> This notion that apocalypticism was a Protestant tradition is also subscribed to by Carmen Gomez-Galisteo who has claimed that ‘The Protestant apocalyptic tradition... was to help shape a distinctively English identity’.<sup>55</sup> This would appear to dismiss any notion that Catholics also held an eschatological perspective or that English identity could be something other than Protestant. The devotional works of More, Fisher, Persons and Hopkins suggest that Catholics also had a strong eschatological tradition and show the variety of eschatological understandings amongst English Catholics, which included a historicist approach.

Overemphasis on polemic can help construct a false picture of Catholics not subscribing to historicist understandings of the Apocalypse or considering their own times as apocalyptic. It is clear from the dedicatory epistle that Hopkins was applying the prophecies of the End contained within the Bible to his own age and that he understood his environment apocalyptically. Hopkins’s epistle also contests the idea that the historicist interpretation was only expounded by Catholics later in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Rodney Peterson has argued that

Although futurist and preterist readings of the Apocalypse were quickly developed by Catholic exegetes, in part to counter the Protestant historicist use of the text, some Catholics expounded their own historicist line. Ignatius was at times identified with the fifth angel of the Apocalypse... Joannes Osorius (1595) and Blasius Viegas (1601) proposed this idea, which was officially adopted at the Council of Tatra (1602).<sup>56</sup>

While Peterson does include the fact that Catholic apocalypticism was not monolithic and that historicist understandings did develop, they are presented as aberrations to the ‘counter-historicist’ rule. What makes Hopkins’s epistle particularly interesting is his combination of

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<sup>54</sup> A. Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History: The Re-enchantment of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 172.

<sup>55</sup> C. Gomez-Galisteo, ‘Flight from the Apocalypse: Protestants, Puritans and the Great Migration’, in: K. Kinane & M. A. Ryan (eds.), *End of Days: Essays on the Apocalypse from Antiquity to Modernity* (London, MacFarland, 2009), p. 104.

<sup>56</sup> R. L. Peterson, *Preaching in the Last Days: The Theme of “Two Witnesses” in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 198 fn.94.

‘historical’ apocalypse and “mystical” apocalypse. John Joseph Collins has described the ‘historical’ as being ‘represented vividly by the book of Revelation... concerned with the rise and fall of nations and with the end of history and the world’ and the second type, “Cosmic” or “mystical”, as that ‘which focuses rather on the eschatology of the individual and the fate of the soul after death’.<sup>57</sup> The text Hopkins had translated and written a ‘historical’ epistle for was a “mystical” apocalypticism as it focused on the four last things. “Mystical” apocalypticism is concerned with the spiritual end of life but should not be understood as only effecting the soul or being non-physical. The General Judgement was understood by early modern Catholics as a future physical event. Hopkins’s ‘Epistle’ shows how the devotional eschatology of the four last things had a close relationship to and could promote apocalypticism.

The brevity of human life and the Day of Judgement was a popular theme in Catholic devotional literature throughout the Elizabethan period. The opening lines of John Bucke’s *Instructions for the use of beads* which was written during his exile in Louvain in 1589 stressed the fleeting nature of life and the inescapable judgement of God. Bucke taught that

For as much as man borne in to this worlde haith no long time to live  
Here, he being... lent, not geuen to life: And for that we must render an  
accompt, at the daye of Judgeme[n]t (before that dreadfull Judge,  
whiche is voyde of partialitie), not onlie of words and woorkes, but of  
eache moment of time spent here, yea even unto the thoughtes of our  
hartes.<sup>58</sup>

The notion that man is ‘lent, not geuen... life’ emphasised that life was not man’s to dispose of as he wished and as such an account of what one has done with this borrowed time would be demanded. Bucke was a Catholic priest and what is interesting is that this work was about the proper use of rosary beads, not the apocalypse or the four last things, but the opening lines consider the Day of Judgement and the account one must give. This suggests that much devotional activity was ultimately directed towards the Day of Judgement and saving one’s soul, rather than the praising of God, and attempts were being made to foster an apocalyptically informed devotional piety. In 1600 the Catholic priest Thomas Worthington wrote another text

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<sup>57</sup> J. J. Collins, ‘Introduction’, in: J. J. Collins & B. McGinn (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Apocalypticism*, vol. I: *The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity* (London, Bloomsbury, 2000), p. xiv.

<sup>58</sup> J. Bucke, *Instructions for the vse of the beades, conteining many matters of meditacion or mentall prayer, with diuerse good aduises of ghostly counsayle* (Louvain, 1589), sig. Aiiir.



concerned with praying the rosary which was eschatologically orientated. Worthington was, like Bucke, in exile while he composed his work and associated with figures such as Gregory Martin and William Allen. Worthington reminded Catholics that ‘The selfe same Lord and Redemer wil come againe in great power, and Majestie, Judge of al, Angels and men: And wil render to everie one (according as they shal deserve wel or evil) everlasting paine, or everlasting glorie’.<sup>59</sup> Worthington directed Catholics to ‘preserve in his service to the end’ because ‘he wil geve unto thee (my soule) shortly after death, and to my bodie for thy sake, in the general judgement day, when al flesh shal rise againe, an inestimable crowne of glorie, and life everlasting’.<sup>60</sup> Worthington was looking to the future for redemption, divine justice, and restoration and saw these predicted events as the best stimulus for perseverance. The writings of Catholic authors such as Persons, Worthington and Bucke were not just coloured by their experience of exile but also by the fact that they were writing for an increasingly persecuted community in their home country. There was a strong connection between eschatology, apocalypticism and exile. John explicitly informed the reader that he recorded his revelation while in exile for religion on the island of Patmos.<sup>61</sup> Exile changed both biblical and early modern authors’ temporal focuses.<sup>62</sup> The combat myth informed Christian apocalypticism and is repeated through the Apocalypse of John, personified in the figures of Christ versus Antichrist. Within the writings of Persons, Bucke and Worthington the combat has been spiritualised and internalised and was presented as a conflict between serving God or serving the flesh. Although still focused on God’s ultimate judgement and a restoration to life the combat is neither past nor future but present. This could indicate that these writers viewed their own times as the End times and that people were daily choosing between Christ and Antichrist. The eschatological undertones of these regular Catholic practices reinforced the ordinary and omnipresent nature of devotional apocalypticism.

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<sup>59</sup> De Vos M. [T. Worthington], *The rosarie of our Ladie. Otherwise called our Ladies psalter* (1600), p. 111.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>61</sup> Apocalypse 1:9, The nexus between a religiously persecuted community and teaching from exile was clear as John was held to be exiled under the Roman rule of Domitian which persecuted the Christian community more generally.

<sup>62</sup> Richard J. Clifford, while researching the role of combat myths in Near Eastern apocalypticism, has argued that ‘In many old poems and psalms the combat is past and undergrids the present order. With the exile, the present order has collapsed, and so the combat is moved to the future, with a view to restoration’, see: R. J. Clifford, S. J., ‘The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Eastern Myth’, in: J. J. Collins & B. McGinn (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Apocalypticism, vol. I: The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity* (London, Bloomsbury, 2000), p. 34.

### **Philip Howard and Peter Mowle**

The theme of the shortness of life and having to provide an account of one's actions also underpinned Philip Howard's devotional poem the 'Pathe to Paradise'. Philip Howard was the thirteenth earl of Arundel and had converted to Catholicism in 1584 being received into the Church by the Jesuit William Weston. Prior to this Howard had lived a worldly life at Cambridge and had expended a significant sum of money creating the image of a courtier and seeking Elizabeth's favour. Howard failed to procure Elizabeth's patronage and returned in disgrace to his wife whom he had left in the country. Howard's wife Anne, nee Dacre, had converted to Catholicism in the early 1580s and was known to harbour Catholic priests. In 1585 Philip Howard attempted to flee to the Continent as he was unable to reconcile his faith with serving the Queen. He was intercepted in the English Channel and immediately imprisoned in the Tower of London. Howard wrote the 'Pathe to Paradise' during his imprisonment and under the sentence of death for treason which he had received on 14 April 1589. Howard died on the 15 October 1595 before the sentence could be carried out and copies of his poem circulated in manuscript in January 1595. This suggests that the poem must have been written between 1589 and late 1594 as the copy of the poem in the Rawlinson manuscript makes reference to the attainder.<sup>63</sup> The poem was popular amongst English Catholics with new copies still circulating in manuscript in 1600 and in 1606 the poem was printed but attributed to Howard's friend the Jesuit Robert Southwell.<sup>64</sup> Paul Strauss has stressed how in recusant prison literature, 'Consideration of the ultimate facts of existence always led them to the four last things – death, judgement, hell, and heaven'.<sup>65</sup> Judgement and death at the hands of the regime coloured the recusants' thoughts of their own life at that moment and it was natural that the judgement of God and the afterlife were subsequently considered. Recusants gained religious authority through imprisonment and sentencing as imprisonment was often held to be a long martyrdom and the beginning of the route to actual martyrdom. Martyrs were considered witnesses to religious truth and thus their words were imbued with greater power. Also, as Strauss has argued, 'The prison environment bears certain resemblances to the monastic life, especially when the prisoner found themselves in solitary confinement'.<sup>66</sup> Further tropes of religious authority worked on the reception of these texts as 'The prison writings of the

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<sup>63</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson. Poetry 219, fols.1r – 14r, loose sheets.

<sup>64</sup> N. Pollard Brown (ed.), R. Southwell, *Two Letters and Short Rules of a Good Life* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1973), p. xii.

<sup>65</sup> P. Strauss, *In Hope of Heaven: English Recusant Prison Writings of the Sixteenth Century* (New York, Peter Lang, 1995), p. 4.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

Apostles' formed a close 'analogue to the recusant inspiration'.<sup>67</sup> Paul had written the letter to the Ephesians and the epistle to the Colossians during his imprisonment at Rome and John had received his revelation during imprisonment. The notion of the prison cell as a religious space and one that invited divine truth was resurrected with the Reformation. As previously discussed in this chapter, John Fisher and Thomas More composed their considerations of death and judgement while imprisoned. Howard's poem was thus imbued with greater religious authority because of the circumstances under which it was composed.

Howard summarised the tradition of the four last things in his instruction to the reader to 'Bee once resolved... To live to dye that thou mayst die to live'.<sup>68</sup> The variant title contained in the Rawlinson manuscript suggests that Howard was preparing for his own death as it is described as 'A poeme of the contempte of the world and an exhortacion to prepare to dye made by Phillipe earle of Arundell after his attaynder'.<sup>69</sup> This could explain the prominent position of the consideration of death in the poem compared to the place of judgement. As we have seen previously, in adapting the four last things to an Ignatian scheme Robert Persons moved discussion of Judgement Day to before his consideration of death and gave Judgement Day greater attention in the structure of his text. Persons's motivation was to strengthen piety in this life but Howard was preoccupied with thoughts of his own oncoming death and had been counselled about the joys of heaven and redemption through suffering for God. The introduction to the work began with imagining heaven and talking of the need to abandon the world if one wants to be redeemed.<sup>70</sup> Quickly in the text Howard spoke of the 'teares of [a] true repentaunte hearte' and the necessity of repentance for admittance into heaven.<sup>71</sup> The next two folios described heaven and the glory of God enthroned.<sup>72</sup> Howard then considered how one should live to dye and that the world is false with earthly pleasure leading to eternal pain.<sup>73</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman have argued that death often began medieval texts on the last things as it was a 'future event taking place in a more assuredly proximate time than the apocalypse'.<sup>74</sup> This is present in Howard's work and explains the structure of the poem.

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>68</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a5, fol.3r (P. Howard, *The Pathe to Paradise*, England, c. 1600).

<sup>69</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson. Poetry 219, ff.1r – 14r, loose sheets.

<sup>70</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a5, fol. 1r (P. Howard, *The Pathe to Paradise*, England, c. 1600).

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 1v.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, fols. 2r – 2v.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*, fols.3r – 3v.

<sup>74</sup> C. Walker Bynum and P. Freedman (eds.), *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 10.

Howard stressed the temporary nature of earthly goods and riches and claimed that ‘Thus have I shewen the world, and what it is: A wicked place, and ful of wretched woes: A sinck of synne, shut out from heavenly blisse: Where want of grace, doth witt and reason loose: So vile a thing, as who in kinde doth prove it’.<sup>75</sup> These passages suggest that Howard’s experience of seeking but being denied Elizabeth’s favour and his later imprisonment had inflected his ideas on life, death and judgement. This poem was written by a man who had inherited a great amount of wealth to see his efforts come to naught and his possessions confiscated. The poem also contained echoes of the consolation he received from Robert Southwell and the deep effect the conversion to Catholicism had on Howard’s outlook. Howard’s Latin inscription which he carved into the octagonal room in the Tower during his imprisonment is suggestive of this resignation to redemption through physical suffering. It translates as ‘the more affliction we endure for Christ in this world, the more glory we shall obtain with Christ in the next’.<sup>76</sup> Howard presented the notion that on Judgement Day his sins would be weighed and he could look towards heaven because he had redeemed himself from earlier errors in life through his suffering for Christ.

This was certainly the message Robert Southwell desired to impart to Howard in the *Epistle of Comfort* which he dedicated to Howard and was a reworking of the letters Southwell had sent to the earl. Southwell had been introduced to Anne Howard in 1586 and was supported and sheltered by her being her confessor and chaplain.<sup>77</sup> Southwell claimed to have ‘written this Epistle of Comferte to an espeaciale frende of myne’ and Howard’s own spiritual journey is close to the description of how

it must needs be a great comfort to those that ether reclaimed from  
schism, or heresie, or from dissolute lyfe to the consta[n]t proffessio[n]  
of the Catholike faith, are for that cause by the devil & his instruments

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<sup>75</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a5, fols. 4v, 5r (P. Howard, *The Pathe to Paradise*, England, c. 1600).

<sup>76</sup> ‘quanto plus afflictionis pro Christo in hoc saeculo, tanto plus gloriae cum Christo in futuro’.

<sup>77</sup> T. McCoog, *The Society of Jesus in Ireland, Scotland, and England 1541-1588: Our Way of Proceeding?* (Leiden, Brill, 1996), p. 237.

persecuted: for that is a very great signe that they are delivered out of his power & by him accounted for sheepe of Gods flocke.<sup>78</sup>

Howard, and others, were to take comfort from persecution as a sign of redemption. Southwell was clear that ‘Ther shall come a Judgeme[n]t, that shall make the wicked wither, and the faythfull flourishe... Better therefore it is to be chastised here with Gods children, then spared and pampered with the vassals of Satan’.<sup>79</sup> Southwell understood tribulation to mark God’s Church and the saved not because God was the author of these persecutions but because the devil committed persecution and he determined that Satan would not persecute his own followers. Strauss has claimed that Southwell ‘believed that... since the devil is working hard to finish off the Catholic cause, persecution is a sure indication that Catholics are out of the devil’s hands’.<sup>80</sup> This brings attention to another aspect of consolatory and devotional works: while considering the apocalypse and Judgement they dealt with the nature of God and the nature of evil. It uncovers Catholic views of the Elizabethan regime which may not have been expressed explicitly for fear of provoking a general reprisal against the English Catholic community. The Protestant regime, in persecuting Catholics, must be the instruments of the devil.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore the notion that the devil was ‘working hard to finish off the Catholic cause’ and that persecution had increased would suggest that Southwell perceived the devil to have been unbound and provides insight into where Southwell placed the world in the apocalyptic time-line. Due to the fact that Southwell had repeatedly consoled Howard, Southwell’s beliefs and what is contained within the *Epistle of Comfort* are important for understanding Howard’s approach to the last things. It was with these ideas in mind that Howard composed his own poetic consideration of the end of human life.

Following a lengthy description of death, Howard’s ‘Pathe to Paradise’ turns to an eleven folio page discussion of the Judgement of God stating that ‘The hower is come, thy debts thou needs must paye’.<sup>82</sup> Howard imagined how ‘The Judge is sett and bootelesse is

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<sup>78</sup> R. Southwell, *An epistle of comfort to the reverend priestes, & to the honorable, worshipful, & other of the laye sort restrayned in durance for the Catholicke fayth* (Paris [i.e. London by John Charlewood, in Arundel House], 1587), fols.2r, 4r.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, fol.16v.

<sup>80</sup> P. Strauss, *In Hope of Heaven: English Recusant Prison Writings of the Sixteenth Century* (New York, Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 110 – 111.

<sup>81</sup> The notion of eschatological identity confirmation is discussed at more length in chapter 6, pp. 230 – 237.

<sup>82</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a5, fols. 8r, 9r (P. Howard, *The Pathe to Paradise*, England, c. 1600).

delaye' and each individual must 'Behould his power whome here thou didst offend, For vaine delights which were but mere deceipte'.<sup>83</sup> Howard moves from the individual end to the end of time and the world and his poem is therefore structurally opposite to Persons's *Christian Exercise* but follows the structure of Hopkins's translation of Luis De Granada's *Of Prayer and Meditation*. Howard listed the signs of Judgement Day and claimed that 'The signes appeare and on it com[m]eth fast/ Behold the sunne is darke which shines bright/ The stares do fal the moon hath lost her light'.<sup>84</sup> The overturning of nature would continue and the reader was to 'Behold how bloode the trees and branches sweate... Behold the sea against the land doth beate/ And roaring lowed doth force the earth to shake/ Her surges mount her swelling fury shewes/ And on the land her fishe with rage shee throwes'.<sup>85</sup> The repetition of 'Behold' throughout the description of the apocalypse was a literary device and shows Howard's intent that the reader should visualise these events. It was not just a poem and description but aimed to guide the reader through an apocalyptic meditation. Howard proposed that there would be a public Judgement and described how 'The Angel lowed his dreadful trumpet soundes / And summons al that everlife posseste/ The earth with woe and terror al aboundes/ The dead do rise that songe have lyen in rest/ Both quick and dead assembled round doth stande/ And waite his wil whose cominge is at hand'.<sup>86</sup> Similar to Robert Persons, Howard emphasised the indignation of God and claimed that 'His furious wrath no creature can abide' and that at that day 'Above thee sits the judge al fild with rage / Whome in thy life thou lewdly didst offend/ No help thou hast his fury to assage'.<sup>87</sup> Howard stressed how the 'Judges words are like a burning fire' and 'It looketh not his mercy to require' because the 'time is past of calling now for grace'.<sup>88</sup> According to Howard earthly life was the time to call for grace with one's actions which was an idea which may have supported Catholic separatism and disobedience. Devotional works placed the threat of damnation and salvation above earthly motivations. This was a continuation of the ideas about the last things we saw being propounded by Thomas More and John Fisher. Indeed, following a contemplation of what it would be like to be damned to hell we find a passage reminiscent of Fisher's ideas. Howard proposed that 'fiery flames in every parte torment/ An Isy cold thou also findest there/ With gnashing teeth it makes thee to lament/ Thy teares with heat in streames are dayly shead'.<sup>89</sup> Fisher had claimed that

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 10r.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 13v.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 14r.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 14v.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 14v.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 16r.

<sup>89</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a5, fol. 17r (P. Howard, *The Pathe to Paradise*, England, c.1600).

the damned sinners that would not here wepe w[ith] Christ, such teares as might washe theyr sinnes, shall wepe in hell ... such teares as shall skalde theyr bodies... Ther shal be weeping & gnashing of teeth... & the coldenesse of the snow shal make their teeth for to gnashe, & chytter in theyr heades.<sup>90</sup>

The close parallels between Howard's text and Fisher's sermon may indicate how deeply the tradition of eschatological devotion ran in the early modern Catholic community.

Works of eschatological devotion circulated in manuscript form and were of such popularity that the Catholic scribe Peter Mowle used apocalyptic meditations when appealing for patrons and as samples of his work. Mowle transcribed Philip Howard's 'Four Fold Meditations', otherwise known as 'The Pathe to Paradise', and entitled it 'SARTAINNE moste holsome meditations verey meete to bee dulia considered and had in remembrance. To w[ith]drawe our affections from this vaine and wicked worlde'.<sup>91</sup> Mowle dedicated the manuscript to Lady Viscount Hereford and presented it to her as a New Years gift in 1595 with a shorter dedicatory mention of her husband Edward Devereux.<sup>92</sup> Lady Viscount Hereford was the matriarch of a powerful Catholic family based in Parham in Sussex and Mowle would have liked to have gained the attention and subsequent patronage from her and her network. The handwritten text was devoted to the four last things and began with a meditation on how no one will escape death. Assured of the certainty that 'The tyme will come when Death will thee assaulte' in the first part, the reader was encouraged to repent their sins as the text moved to focus on the soul being released from the body and the 'wretched state' of the sinner at the particular judgement of the soul.<sup>93</sup> Part three introduced a lengthy textual description of the Day of Judgement in which the reader was to imagine themselves there. This extensive imagining of the general Judgement is followed by the fourth and fifth parts which cover the torments of hell and the joys of heaven. The manuscript's use as a recruitment for patronage suggests that the four last things and the Apocalypse were a popular Catholic devotional theme. The argument of the title, that these meditations were 'To w[ith]drawe our affections from this vaine and wicked worlde', implied that Catholics used devotion in order to confront and survive

<sup>90</sup> J. Fisher, *A spirituall consolation* (London, W. Carter, 1578), Sig.Iiir.

<sup>91</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a6, (P. Mowle, Sartaine Most Holsome Meditations Verey Meete To Bee Dulia Considered, England, c.1595).

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, fol. ir.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, fols. 2r, 3v.

in the new religious climate in England. This may indicate that for Catholics the idea of a coming apocalypse could have provided hope and taught that divine justice would right the wrongs they were suffering.

The dedicatory epistle is instructive about Catholic views of this period. Mowle was, as previously mentioned, looking to secure Lady Viscount Hereford's patronage and thus would have expressed views in his epistle which he believed would appeal to her. He wrote that

in this calamytie of [ti]me our meditations for ye moste p[ar]t  
bee of another sorte, for verie light losse drives us into dumpes.  
evrie Crosse is a crosse to our hartes, and everie trifelinge trouble  
vehement vexsation to our minds...<sup>94</sup>

The phrase 'in this calamytie of [ti]me' is striking and may indicate that consciousness of persecution encouraged a belief that the apocalypse was nigh. It may also suggests that the ongoing calamities were interpreted as something special and unique within the stretch of earthly time. The phrase 'in this calamytie of [ti]me' becomes even more interesting as the epistle follows directly to concerns of overcoming the 'Enemie of mankind'.<sup>95</sup> Peter Mowle claimed that

The Enemie of mankind is in nothinge so muche... overcome, as  
in our constant sufferings & moderate entertainment of worldlie  
calamities. Wch to pr[e]vent hee tryeth his witt to ye ytermoste  
to move us to impatiencie by one adverse happ or other, and  
dothe continewallie keepe our minds occupied wth vaine & fond  
cogitations.<sup>96</sup>

According to Mowle it is patience that will defeat the 'Enemie of mankind' which could allude to the idea that Catholics expected an end to their sufferings in the near future. Personal patience implies that the time-span of what is being endured is that of a person's life. The

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<sup>94</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a6, fol.ir. (P. Mowle, *Sartaine Most Holsome Meditations Verey Meete To Bee Dulie Considered*, England, 1595).

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a6, fol. Ir. (P. Mowle, *Sartaine Most Holsome Meditations Verey Meete To Bee Dulie Considered*, England, 1595).



‘Enemie of mankind’ Mowle referred to could be the devil and therefore it may follow that it was believed that the devil’s bounds had been loosened, signalled by the increased activities and misfortunes. Apocalypse 20:7 described how after a thousand years Satan would be released from his prison to deceive the nations and to gather them to war. This is important because Catholics often described and considered Protestantism as a deception.<sup>97</sup> With Protestantism being legally enshrined as the religion of England it may have appeared to Catholics that the nation was at risk of being deceived. Works of devotional eschatology may have provided hope to endure the calamities of the time as the genre used the last things to encourage Catholics to resist worldly temptation through remembering that God would Judge them.

As previously mentioned, Mowle transcribed Philip Howard’s ‘The Pathe to Paradise’. However an act of transcription in early modern Europe did not mean that the scribe was simply copying a source. Alexandra Walsham contends that translation should be viewed ‘as an exercise in exegesis, interpretation, and religious agency’ and that we need to set ‘aside anachronistic assumptions that polarise originals and derivatives and regard translation as a lesser form of authorship’.<sup>98</sup> Mowle’s additions can reveal both his personal eschatology and that which he thought would most appeal to the Catholic circle surrounding Lady Viscount Hereford. The inclusion of ‘arguments’ shows how Mowle did not undertake a simple act of transcription but edited Howard’s text to provide small introductory summaries and breaks in the devotional poem. The beginning of the ‘Third parte of ye Argument’ related ‘THE sundrie signes & tokens yt foregoe ye fearefull daye of Gods eternall dome’. These were purported to include

... ye falling starre w[i]ch manie wonders noe  
that shall appeere before our Lord dothe come

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<sup>97</sup> F. Staphylus, *The apologie of Fridericus Staphylus counseller to the late Emperour Ferdinandus, &c. Intreating of the true and right vnderstanding of holy Scripture. Of the translation of the Bible in to the vulgar tongue. Of disagreement in doctrine amonge the protestants. Translated out of Latin in to English by Thomas Stapleton, student in divinite. Also a discourse of the translatour uppon the doctrine of the protestants which he trieth by the three first founders and fathers thereof, Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, and especially John Calvin* (Antwerp, John Latius, 1565), title page, T. Stapleton, *A Fortresse of the Faith* (Antwerp, John Laet, 1565), fol. 6r.

<sup>98</sup> A. Walsham, ‘Luis de Granada’s Mission to Protestant England: Translating the Devotional Literature of the Spanish Counter Reformation’, in: T. Bela, C. Calma & J. Rzegocka (eds.), *Underground and Across the Channel: Subversive Publishing in Early Modern England and Poland* (London, Brill, 2016), pp. 129 – 154.

... lowed ye Trumpett shrill shall sounde  
and how ye worlde w[i]th terror shall abounde.<sup>99</sup>

The text continued to describe how

a fierie fludd appearing in ye Skies  
yt of this worlde shall make a final end  
a ruine of tyme a wrack of worldlie blis  
ye just mans joye. ye badd their bame yt is.<sup>100</sup>

It is interesting that the signs of Judgement Day were to be ‘had in remembrance’ and could allude to an underlying expectation for its arrival within Mowle’s life time. Similar to other Catholic works dealing with the apocalypse, no time scale is suggested but the impression is given that one was to remain ever ready for its arrival. As Brian Ball has concluded from his research into Protestant apocalyptic beliefs in the seventeenth century, ‘that no attempt should be made to date the end of the world... does not preclude belief in an imminent second coming’.<sup>101</sup> Providing a date for the End was discouraged in the Bible and Catholic tradition but worked harmoniously alongside promoting a belief and readiness for its impending arrival. Matthew 24:36 taught how the date of the End of the world was unknowable, not even to the angels, but that one was to remain ever ready. Augustine of Hippo, while convinced that the world was in the last age, claimed that human understanding could never grasp how or when the events of the End would occur but was certain that they would.<sup>102</sup> Thus Mowle’s additions to the text of summaries of signs of the End which were to be ‘had in remembrance’ suggest that Mowle perceived the Last Judgement to be looming despite his not attempting to date its arrival.

Howard’s and Mowle’s meditations may reflect the Jesuit preoccupation with human action and salvation underlining the influence of the Jesuit missionaries despite the small

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<sup>99</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a6, fol. 5v (P. Mowle, *Sartaine Most Holsome Meditations Verrey Meete To Bee Dulie Considered*, England, 1595).

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> B. W. Ball, *Great Expectations: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden, Brill, 1975), p. 22.

<sup>102</sup> St. Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, Book XX, 30, see: St. Augustine, *The City of God*, M. Dod’s (trans.), (Peabody, Hendrickson, 2015), p. 688.

numbers operating in England. This is suggested by the strong focus in each text on Judgement because although both detail some signs of the Apocalypse Howard's and subsequently Mowle's manuscripts do not follow the Biblical timeline or contain details of other events. The manuscript and Howard's text quickly move onto Christ's Second Coming and the General Judgement rather than detailing the woes and different events in the Apocalypse. For example the texts describe how

The Angells lowd their Trumpetth dreadfull sound

and su[m]mons all yt ever lyfe posest

the Earth wth woe & terror dothe abound

the dead arise yt longe hathe bene at rest

bothe quicke & dead assemble drownd doe stand

and wayte his will whose co[m]minge is at hand

Behoulde haw lowe both Heaven & Earth doth bowe

and p[ro]strate all his favores to desire

beholde how Christ in glorie co[m]meth now

and in ye ayre appears a fludd of fier

the Earthe for feare doe tremble att this sight.<sup>103</sup>

This rapid jump to the Second Coming and the judgement of the quick and the dead could suggest a Catholic view that the terror of the events leading to the Day of Judgement would be nothing in comparison to the terror of having to give an account to God. The silence sharply contrasts the pain of the prophesised plagues with the pain of possible damnation. This highlights a subtle yet important difference between Catholic and Protestant texts of the period which dealt with the subject of the apocalypse. Protestant texts tended to focus on the terrors and catastrophes leading up to the final Judgement whereas Catholics shifted focus to the individual giving an account to God and receiving just reward or punishment. A marginal note

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<sup>103</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a6, fol. 6r (P. Mowle, *Sartaine Most Holsome Meditations Verrey Meete To Bee Dulie Considered*, England, 1595).

by Mowle claimed that the ‘fludd of fires... shall make final confirmation’ which may underscore the idea that Mowle focused on the culmination of apocalyptic events.<sup>104</sup> The notion of a sign of ‘final confirmation’ could indicate an idea that the present was indeed a build up to the End or could be a response to the repeated apocalyptic clamours of the recent past such as the burst of Protestant apocalypticism surrounding the astrological predictions of 1583 and the year 1588 with the defeat of the Spanish Armada.<sup>105</sup> The notion of a ‘final confirmation’ could suggest that Mowle interpreted events as ongoing confirmations. Although Catholic devotional works were not directed by a Protestant agenda neither were they produced in a vacuum and the sources were imprinted by the milieu in which they were produced.

Finally, meditations on the apocalypse bring to light an often neglected aspect of Catholic apocalypticism: it was vengeful. Mowle described that after the Judgement

O wretched man how heavie is how dost yu wishe for yt wch can not bee  
 how dost thou sigh & quake in evrie part  
 and must thie frind bee severd thirs from thee  
 they fild wth ioys in glorie now shall raigne  
 & full of greefe yu torment must sustaine.<sup>106</sup>

The marginal note is of particular interest here for it explains that ‘The desperate sorrowe feare of ye wicked be muche more augmented in beholldinge their friende blessedines are their owne miseries’.<sup>107</sup> Those that are damned are even more tormented by them seeing those that are saved and vice versa. The theme of revenge is also present in Howard’s text and it was stressed that vengeance was reserved for God. The Judge, according to Howard, shall ask ‘Yf of thy foes reveng thou hast not sought’.<sup>108</sup> If Howard’s personal thoughts of God’s dislike of human revenge are extrapolated out to the wider Catholic community, particularly because of the

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<sup>104</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a6, fol.6r (P. Mowle, *Sartaine Most Holsome Meditations Verey Meete To Bee Dulie Considered*, England, c.1595).

<sup>105</sup> Constantinos Patrides and Joseph Anthony Wittreich have considered the spread of apocalyptic predictions surrounding these dates in: C. A. Patrides & J. A. Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984). p. 97.

<sup>106</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a6, fol.6v (P. Mowle, *Sartaine Most Holsome Meditations Verey Meete To Bee Dulie Considered*, England, 1595).

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> New Haven, Yale University Library, Osborn a5, fol.11r (P. Howard, *The Pathe to Paradise*, England, c.1600).

poem's extensive circulation and Southwell's influence on the author, it could add a fresh layer of complexity to the Elizabethan Catholic world-view. It could suggest that Catholic invasion attempts, regime change and assassination attempts were, as often claimed by those partaking in them, motivated by a desire to save souls. That devotional works stressed that revenge was to be reserved to God could also point to the personal struggles individual Catholics had with these feelings. Meditations on the apocalypse may not show meekness but a vengeance postponed to the future and a delighting in the suffering of those that had made one suffer which in turn could reveal an underlying anger of the Catholic community in England.

### **Conclusion**

The vibrant tradition of contemplating the four last things in the Middle Ages and early Reformation continued amongst Elizabethan Catholics and included meditating on the apocalypse. The focus on death and judgment shifted mediums, from Church walls to imaginations, but was still pervasive and Catholics as well as Protestants internalised their focus on Judgement Day through meditations on the apocalypse. Devotional eschatology sustained the Catholic individual in the face of greater, and later potentially lethal, hardships to practicing their faith in England. By sustaining the Catholic individual, devotional eschatology thereby sustained the English Catholic community. As the Elizabethan regime made religion political devotional texts became a political challenge and threatened the established order. Although Catholic devotional works were not led by a Protestant agenda neither were they constructed in a vacuum. The sources are stamped by the milieu in which they were created and also inform us of delicate doctrinal differences. Catholic meditations on the apocalypse were principally intended to guide the individual to salvation but were also subversive, enabling the individual to actively oppose Protestantism. Prayers and meditations on the apocalypse created spaces for the Catholic individual to resist the regime. Hopkins's epistle challenges the idea that a historicist understanding, or even a strong apocalyptic tradition, was the preserve of English Protestants which is currently prevalent in historiography.

This thesis began with this chapter because the early modern Catholic eschatological worldview which this thesis shall explore was founded on devotional eschatology. It made considerations of the End ordinary and pervasive and situated individual experience in relation

to the coming Judgement of God. Building on this perspective, individuals were identified as the End time figures such as Antichrist or Jezebel which resulted in action. From the expectation of the apocalypse and devotional focus on the account one must give to God contemporary events were interpreted in the apocalyptic time-frame and the Reformation was understood as an indicator of the End. The next chapter will examine how Protestantism was considered to be the eschatological False Church and understood as a sign of the End.

## **2: The True Church versus the False Church**

Devotional eschatology helped create and reinforce an eschatological worldview by orientating human actions and life towards Judgement Day. The Reformation was interpreted against this eschatological backdrop. The emergence of a False Church which stood in direct and open opposition to the True Church was considered to be a clear sign that the events of the End had begun. The perceived mysteries of iniquity were thought to no longer be working in secret to subvert the faith and the two camps, Catholics and Protestants, were now preparing for the arrival of their commanders, Christ or Antichrist. The widespread expression of this idea in English Catholic print by leaders of the effort to re-convert England suggests that this was not a fringe notion. Nevertheless, papal reluctance in publically identifying the Protestant Church in England as the False Church meant that Catholics had to argue without the authority of the Pope and views diverged. This may be one reason for the absence of analysis of Catholic ideas about the True and False Church in Catholic historiography. David Bagchi maintains that Catholic historians have criticised ‘the fact that the controversialists took it upon themselves to defend the faith and therefore spoke without the authority of Rome’.<sup>1</sup> The lack of cohesion and leadership may be why Catholic arguments that the Protestant Church was the eschatological False Church have been overlooked in historiography compared to significant research into the more unified Protestant claims that the Pope was Antichrist leading the False Church.<sup>2</sup> If these views have not been overlooked then the authenticity of the belief has been denied. Haigh has described the language of the works as a cosmic rhetoric used to sustain priests’ fervour in training and down played genuine belief in the ideas of a grand cosmic battle.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, Catholic eschatology and apocalypticism were vital for questions surrounding resistance and compromise as it made separation essential for salvation. This chapter will consider the historiographical focus on Protestant arguments and the Catholic ideas about the True and False Church which Protestants and Catholics alike inherited from the Middle Ages. This chapter will then examine a range of early modern Catholic views and arguments surrounding the identity of the eschatological False Church. Finally it will analyse the idea that Protestantism

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<sup>1</sup> D. Bagchi, ‘Luther’s Catholic Opponents’, in: A. Pettegree (ed.), *The Reformation World* (London, Routledge, 2000), p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of studies which focus on Protestant views include: A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), R. Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: sixteenth century apocalypticism, millenarianism, and the English Reformation: from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Abingdon, Sutton Courtney Press, 1978), C. A. Patrides & Joseph Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: patterns, antecedents, and repercussions* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984), W. Johnston, *Revelation Restore: The Apocalypse in Later Seventeenth Century England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> C. Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987) pp. 194–195.

was the predicted Great Apostasy before the End and how eschatological arguments framed the Catholic calls for separation and resistance.

### **Historiography**

It has long been recognised by historians that Protestants interpreted the break with Rome as a sign of the End. However the fact that some Catholics also imbued the Reformation with eschatological significance has hitherto been overlooked. Richard Bauckham has argued that the Protestant John Bale's *Image of Both Churches* 'set the pattern from which the whole sixteenth-century school of English apocalyptic exegesis developed'.<sup>4</sup> Although Bale was significant the notion that all of sixteenth-century English apocalyptic thought was based on Bale's concept of the True and False churches removes English Catholics from the eschatological dialogue. Similarly, English Catholics have been excluded from Warren Johnston's analysis in which he has described Bale as 'instrumental in the growth of English apocalyptic exegesis'.<sup>5</sup> Bale was certainly important for English Protestant apocalyptic and eschatological views but these studies omit that Bale drew on a Catholic conceptual heritage and that there may have been an independent Catholic interpretation of the True and False churches. The historiographical imbalance is partly due to the fact that apocalypticism and the True and False Church debate was at the heart of Protestant identity in England. Bale's *Image of Both Churches*, published repeatedly between 1545 and 1580, devoted itself to proving that the Catholic Church was the False Church of Antichrist. Bale encouraged a historicist approach to the Apocalypse as he set the struggles of his own time in the events of the Book of Revelation and his preface to the 'Christian Reader' began by claiming that 'the knowledge of S. Johns Apocalips or Revelation' was 'highly necessary'.<sup>6</sup> After Bale this worldview was far reaching and Anthony Milton has studied a range of Protestant writings in this period and the significance of the notion of the True and False Church for English Protestants.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> R. Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: sixteenth century apocalypticism, millenarianism, and the English Reformation: from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Abingdon, Sutton Courtney Press, 1978), p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> W. Johnston, *Revelation Restore: The Apocalypse in Later Seventeenth Century England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2011), p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> J. Bale, *The image of both Churches after the most wonderfull and heavenly Revelation of saint John the Evangelist, contayning a very fruitfull exposition or paraphrase upon the same. Wherein it is conferred with the other scriptures, and most auctorised histories. Compyled by Jihn Bale an exile also in thys life, for the faithfull testimony of Jesu* (London, Thomas East, 1570), sig. Aiiir.

<sup>7</sup> A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600-1640* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 132.



John Foxe further embedded the notion of the True Church in battle with the False in English Protestant identity in his influential *Actes and Monuments*. In this work Foxe, who was in exile with Bale during Mary's reign, placed the martyrdoms of English Protestants and the previous struggles of the Church within Bale's apocalyptic framework. Viggo Nørskov Olsen has commented that 'the message of the *Acts and Monuments* [was] written in the charged atmosphere of the last days'.<sup>8</sup> Recognition that the concept of the True Church versus the False was at the foundation of English Protestant identity through research such as that conducted by Christianson, Bauckham, Nørskov Olsen, Johnston and more has been invaluable and has changed the way in which we view Elizabethan Protestantism and the magisterial reformers. This historical research has altered how we understand apocalypticism, showing that it was not always a response to crisis but could be used to support a regime and consolidate power. Despite these advances in understanding the early modern worldview and the eschatological ideas the individual had at their disposal when they were confronted by contemporary events this is only half of the picture. Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell focus exclusively on the Protestant concept of the Catholic Church as the False Church and the Pope as Antichrist which neglects that there may have been a competing narrative.<sup>9</sup> No idea or authority has ever been so dominant as to not be challenged. The absence of Catholic arguments from the historiographical analysis of the True and False church debate reflects how Catholic understandings were overshadowed and marginalised in the early modern period. What we must bear in mind is that it was not only Protestants who saw these eschatological works on the Two Churches or experienced the Reformation, but Catholics also. Thus, it would naturally follow that to engage Protestants with debates over the nature of the Church, the nature of martyrdom and martyrs, history, the status of the Pope and all that featured in the debates of the Reformation, Catholics would have to engage with this apocalyptic worldview. Yet this thesis suggests that Catholics did not just adopt a defensive stance in these apocalyptic debates but also developed their own eschatological and apocalyptic understanding of the present. The focus on Protestant views has created a one sided picture and missed a valuable opportunity to analyse the Catholic response to the emergence of Protestantism and its growth.

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<sup>8</sup> V. N. Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (London, University of California Press, 1978), p. 44.

<sup>9</sup> A. Cunningham & O. P. Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Early modern Catholics had a long conceptual heritage to draw on regarding the True and False Church and their role in eschatology. The Gospel of Matthew was a prime source for developing ideas about the Church and eschatology and as John F. O'Grady has argued, 'The Roman Catholic Church in particular has favoured this gospel'.<sup>10</sup> Matthew divided the world into good and evil, with the two rival forces led by either God or the devil with no middle way.<sup>11</sup> Matthew's ultimate cosmic division was important for the development of the idea of Two Churches because it is in this Gospel alone that the word *ecclesia* was used.<sup>12</sup> Alongside the Gospel of Matthew, the Epistles of Paul and Pauline antichristology had a wide impact on thought about the False Church. Kevin Hughes has described Paul's eschatological vision as 'one in which hidden "forces" presently at work are unified and personified in a crisis of the eschatological future'.<sup>13</sup> These 'hidden forces' were believed to be members of the False Church, who perverted the Word and the world ready for the eventual culmination of their evil in their earthly leader, Antichrist. The Biblical notion of a fundamental eschatological division in the world was investigated and expanded in the Middle Ages. The Catholic theologian towering over Christian thought in the Middle Ages, Augustine, popularised and gave authority to the doctrine of two cities, the heavenly one of God and the spirit, and the earthly one of the flesh and the devil, which would later inform ideas about the Two Churches. In the *City of God* the origin of the city of the flesh was detailed in Book XI, which declared that the earthly City was founded with the rebellion of Angels but really began at the time of the Fall. After Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden the city of the flesh would be populated by a humanity which followed its own will rather than the will of God. The pre-Reformation scholarship and ideas are important because, as Haigh has argued, the 'priests sent on the mission, especially in the early years, were not always impressionable young men, who might have been moulded into agents of Tridentine reform; they were often older inheritors of an established English tradition'.<sup>14</sup> With the emergence of the Reformation and Protestantism's declaration that it was the heir of the True Church the ideas of Augustine and the Biblical arguments around the Two Churches were reinvested with immediate importance. Matthew verse 15 was used by Catholics and Protestants alike to undermine their opponents.<sup>15</sup> At the

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<sup>10</sup> J. F. O'Grady, *The Roman Catholic Church: Its Origin and Nature* (Paulist Press, New York, 1997), p. 75.

<sup>11</sup> D. C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 79, Matthew 7:13–14.

<sup>12</sup> J. F. O'Grady, *The Roman Catholic Church: Its Origin and Nature* (Paulist Press, New York, 1997), p. 75.

<sup>13</sup> K. L. Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist: Paul, Biblical Commentary, and the Development of Doctrine in the Early Middle Ages* (Washington, Catholic University of America Press, 2005), p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> C. Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 194.

<sup>15</sup> H. C. Clarke, *The Gospel of Matthew and its Readers: A Historical introduction to the First Gospel* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 92.

core of the Reformation was an argument over deception and the Two Churches. The rupture of the Reformation, early modern Catholics believed, exposed the identity of the True and False Church.

### **Early Modern Catholics**

It took time for the Protestant Church in England to be identified as the False Church because the Catholic Church was slow in reacting to the accession of another English Protestant monarch and Rome was resistant to according what it perceived as a heresy with the title of a 'church'. The reign of Mary I and her return to Catholicism had left Catholics somewhat unprepared for the changes Elizabeth was about to make. The rise of Protestantism was to become a stimulus for further Catholic contemplations of the End but no systematic and uniformed understanding was propounded. As Adrian Morey has argued of English Catholicism between 1558 and 1570, 'leadership was notably absent'.<sup>16</sup> Rome had not declared the English Protestant Church to be the False Church and therefore critics would have to speak without the authority of the Pope.

By the 1560s some Catholics were moving closer to a perception of Protestants as the eschatological False Church and an indicator that the world had entered its final stages. Thomas Harding led the Catholic written rebuttal of John Jewel's *An Apologie, or answer in defence of the Church of England*, which had been published in both Latin and English in 1562, and began a very public printed debate between Protestant and Catholic religious controversialist. Harding claimed that 'For now in the ende of the worlde we can not be brought back from that olde to beleve a new gospel'.<sup>17</sup> Harding placed his own time at the end of the world and interpreted Protestantism as an eschatological sign. Harding considered Protestantism to be a 'newe church... set up by Sathan through the ministerie of Martin Luther and those other Apostates his co[m]panions, if it may be named a church, and not rather a Babylonical tower'.<sup>18</sup> It is noteworthy that in 1565 Harding used the phrase 'if it may be named a church' which may be a continuation of the reticence which was present in the late 1550s. His description of

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<sup>16</sup> A. Morey, *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1978), p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> T. Harding, *A confutation of a booke intituled An apologie of the Church of England* (Antwerp, 1565), fols. 131v, 132r.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 42r.

Protestantism as a Babylonical tower could allude to the City of Babylon from the Apocalypse. Harding's erudition and extensive biblical knowledge meant that he would not have haphazardly confused the Tower of Babel with Babylon and thus this must have been a deliberate choice. This passage combined three significant themes – Satan, apostates and Babylon – to describe Protestants and each theme was suggestive of the End. Harding argued that 'some truth is by you mingled with falsehed. The rather to deceive. That have ye learned of the Devill father of all heresies, who putteth on the shape of an Angell of light'.<sup>19</sup> This would undermine the Protestant claim that their religion was based on Scripture and a return to the Church unblemished by Romish ceremonies. The notion that the author of Protestantism 'putteth on the shape of an Angell of light' was suggestive of the End and Antichrist's predicted imitation of Christ. The phrasing was drawn directly from Paul's warning of false prophets to the Corinthians suggesting that the biblical warnings spoke directly to Harding's own era.<sup>20</sup> In doing so Harding summarised eschatological teachings that at the end of the world false prophets would preach a new gospel.

Harding argued that the emergence and spread of Protestantism was a sign that the world had entered into the last days. Harding claimed that 'if it be true that ye saye, that almost the whole world loketh that waye, knowing that **in the latter dayes and toward the end of the world iniquitie shall abounde, and all the charitie of the more part shall wexe colde**: we may... judge your gospel to be erroneous and false'.<sup>21</sup> Harding reinforced the link between the spread of Protestantism and the End with his reference to Matthew 24 in the margins. Harding repeatedly returned to scriptural prophecies within his text, possibly to challenge the Protestant contention that they, rather than Catholics, argued from Scripture.<sup>22</sup> Harding contended that

If we on the other side shewe plainly, that the holy scriptures, the auncient fathers, examples and witnesses of the primitive church do make directly against your sects: and that ye have without any just cause forsaken the catholike church and joined your selves to the synagog of Antichrist... we then hope and trust yourselves, or at least many of

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 128v.

<sup>20</sup> 2 Corinthians 11:14.

<sup>21</sup> T. Harding, *A confutation of a booke intituled An apologie of the Church of England* (Antwerp, 1565), fol. 15r., emboldening mine.

<sup>22</sup> H. Parish, 'To console with elde dyunis': History Scripture and Interpretation in Reformation England', in: E. Fulton, H. Parish & P. Webster, *The Search for Authority in Reformation Europe* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014), p. 164.

you... will study by what honest and godly meanes ye may revoke your errors... returne to the catholicke church... and avoid everlasting damnation.<sup>23</sup>

Harding considered the use of Scripture guided by the Church Fathers to be the means to win people back to the faith and defeat the Church of England. Harding believed that this would expose Protestantism as the False Church preparing for Antichrist. It is interesting that Harding suggested that people could ‘revoke... errors’ and that there could be movement between the two churches. Harding thought his era was the prophesied End but did not perceive in 1565 that people’s fates had been sealed.

Harding’s fellow exile and religious controversialist, Thomas Stapleton, an English Catholic theologian who departed to the Continent in 1559 rather than deny the papal primacy, used the voice of translation to identify in English print the Protestant Church as the eschatological False Church. Stapleton translated Frederic Staphylus’s *apologie* which examined Protestant doctrine and was aimed at assisting people to recognise it as false. Staphylus’s personal background was also a significant weapon in Stapleton’s argument. Staphylus had previously been a Protestant and received a personal recommendation from a leading Reformation figure, Philip Melanchthon, to the Count of Eberstein. In 1546 Staphylus was appointed the professor of theology at the University of Konigsberg where a series of theological disputes led to his resignation in 1548 and eventually to his conversion to Catholicism in 1552. In the translation of Staphylus’s text Stapleton showed how a once prominent, learned and successful Protestant converted to the True Church. Stapleton’s decision to translate this work was driven by his desire to convert English Protestants to Catholicism and was part of a larger written attack on Protestants in England. Stapleton’s translation was a year prior to his own ‘literary offensive’ against heresy in England, a task which has earned him the title of a ‘verbal warrior’ from Marvin R. O’Connell.<sup>24</sup> Stapleton was of a similar opinion to Harding that people’s everlasting fates had not yet been fixed and

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<sup>23</sup> T. Harding, *A confutation of a booke intituled An apologie of the Church of England* (Antwerp, 1565), fols. 23v – 24r.

<sup>24</sup> M. R. O’Connell, ‘Thomas Stapleton (1535 – 1598)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004  
< <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26307> >  
[Accessed 14 Oct 2015].

conversion was both possible and necessary. Stapleton, alongside Harding, shows how eschatology framed the argument for conversion, or return, to the Catholic faith.

Apocalyptic eschatology was present on the title page of Stapleton's translation. Under the title was a quotation from Matthew 24:4 to 'Take hede that no man deceave you'.<sup>25</sup> The choice of biblical quote is noteworthy as Matthew 24 is an account of Jesus's supposed apocalyptic teachings to his disciples on Mount Olive.<sup>26</sup> These references to apocalyptic warnings of false prophets come immediately after the names of 'Martin Luther, Philip Melanchton, and especially John Calvin', a positioning which was deliberate and significant.<sup>27</sup> On the title page of a work claiming to prove Protestant doctrines false, and Catholic doctrines true, the main leaders of Protestantism were directly linked to the false prophets who will come at the End. To underscore this association Matthew 7 is then quoted on the title page and advised that 'Ye shal knowe them by their frutes'.<sup>28</sup> This suggests that Stapleton chose to appeal eschatologically to Protestants to convert and to Catholics to remain faithful. What is interesting about the use of the Gospel of Matthew instead of the Apocalypse is the way in which the eschatological events are presented in each biblical text. In the Apocalypse the description of the End is presented as a revealing of the future whereas Matthew described the events of the End as happening now. The language and tenses change and this in turn brings the End from future to present. The use of Matthew rather than the Apocalypse could therefore suggest that Stapleton and Staphylus shared a similar view with the author of the Matthew that the End Times had begun.

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<sup>25</sup> F. Staphylus, *The apologie of Fridericus Staphylus counsellor to the late Emperour Ferdinandus, &c. Intreating of the true and right vnderstanding of holy Scripture. Of the translation of the Bible in to the vulgar tongue. Of disagreement in doctrine amonge the protestants. Translated out of Latin in to English by Thomas Stapleton, student in divinite. Also a discourse of the translatour uppon the doctrine of the protestants which he trieth by the three first founders and fathers thereof, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and especially John Calvin* (Antwerp, John Latius, 1565), title page.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 24:3 – 4.

<sup>27</sup> F. Staphylus, *The apologie of Fridericus Staphylus counsellor to the late Emperour Ferdinandus, &c. Intreating of the true and right vnderstanding of holy Scripture. Of the translation of the Bible in to the vulgar tongue. Of disagreement in doctrine amonge the protestants. Translated out of Latin in to English by Thomas Stapleton, student in divinite. Also a discourse of the translatour uppon the doctrine of the protestants which he trieth by the three first founders and fathers thereof, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and especially John Calvin* (Antwerp, John Latius, 1565), title page.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, Matthew 7:16.

This message continued through the text as Stapleton's translation of Staphylus contained a subtly apocalyptic image. Around half way through the text there is a depiction of the tree of current heresies:

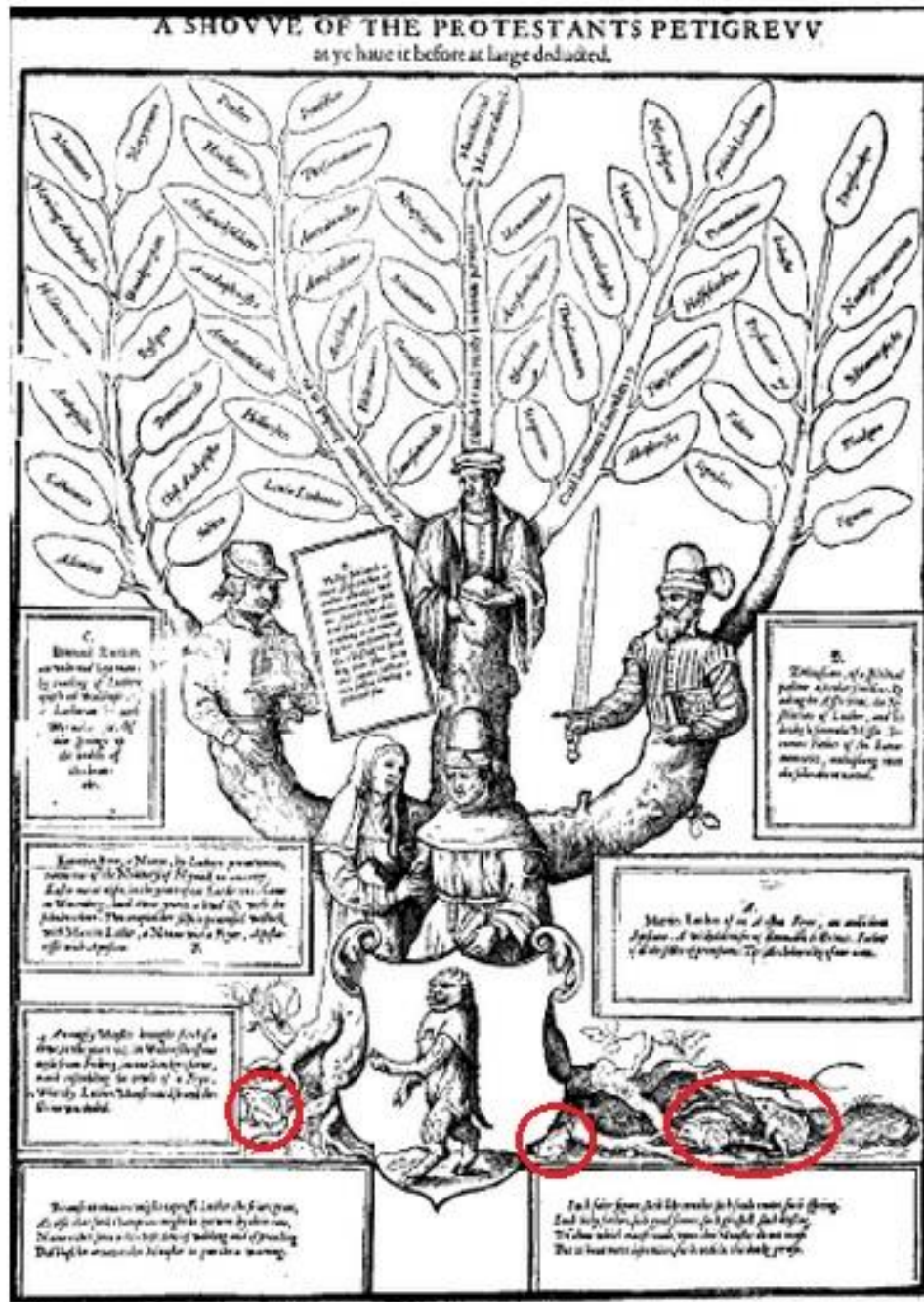


Figure Two.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> F. Staphylus, *The apologie of Fridericus Staphylus counsellor to the late Emperour Ferdinandus, &c. Intreating of the true and right vnderstanding of holy Scripture. Of the translation of the Bible in to the vulgar tongue. Of*

This picture is more than a tree of heresies in light of the apocalyptic quotation of Matthew 7 on the title page. The leaves contain the names of various sects from ‘Signifiers’, ‘Antisktanckarians’, ‘Hellmasters’ to ‘Adamites’ and more, which portrayed dissention and discord. The box on the left hand side described how ‘An ougly Monster brought forth of a cowe, in 1552, in Waltersdorff... Whereby Luthers Monstrous life and doctrine was waed’. This message of monstrosity was reinforced in the bottom left hand box which reported that ‘Bicause no colours might expresse Luther the friers grace, As also that such Champions might be knowen by their race, Nature therefore in his chefe time of wedding and of preaching, Did blese his armes in the Monster to geve the a warning’.<sup>30</sup> The bottom right hand corner was similarly concerned with monstrosity and instructed ‘thou which may reade, upon this Monster do not muse, But to have more deformities, his broode in this booke peruse’.<sup>31</sup> In the early modern period monsters were believed to portend significant events, such as political regime change and there was an apocalyptic undercurrent to the appearance or greater frequency of monsters. Laura Lunger Knoppers and Joan Landes have argued that the ‘tradition of the apocalyptic monstrous’ was ‘drawn from the Book of Revelation and part of the visual and verbal legacy of the Reformation’.<sup>32</sup> The details and monstrosity in this picture were certainly forewarnings of the deformity of Protestantism, but could the monstrosity resulting from Protestantism be an eschatological and apocalyptic portent?

At first sight this image does not appear particularly eschatological with its focus on monstrosity and discord. However, the roots of the tree reveal the supposed eschatological and apocalyptic genesis of the Protestant heresies. Described as ‘suche foule rootes, such offspring’ there are frogs at the roots of the tree ‘Of Protestant Petigrew’.<sup>33</sup> In Apocalypse 16:13 unclean spirits, described as ‘like frogs’, emerge from the mouth of the false prophet, the mouth of the beast and the mouth of the dragon. They are sent forth into the earth to deceive with signs and gather the monarchs to do battle against God.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the text was

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*disagreement in doctrine amonge the protestants. Translated out of Latin in to English by Thomas Stapleton, student in divinite. Also a discourse of the translatour uppon the doctrine of the protestants which he trieth by the three first founders and fathers thereof, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and especially John Calvin* (Antwerp, John Latius, 1565), fols. 127v – 128r.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> L. Lunger Knoppers & J. B. Landes (eds.), *Monstrous Bodies / Political Monstrosities in Early Modern Europe* (London, Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> F. Staphylus, *The apologie of Fridericus Staphylus*, fols. 127v – 128r.

<sup>34</sup> Apocalypse 16: 13 – 19.



set in an eschatological and apocalyptic interpretive framework because this image was to be viewed with the title page quotations from Matthew 24:4 and Matthew 7:16 in mind. These quotations were significant because Matthew has been characterised by historians and theologians as the eschatological gospel.<sup>35</sup> The image contained in Stapleton's translation may not be as easily recognisable as eschatological to the modern observer as the title page from Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* but it nonetheless contained a similar argument, albeit inverted. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia has argued that the interpretation of the monstrous in sixteenth-century Germany was 'generally split along confessional lines, with fear dominating the language of prodigy in Lutheran discourse on monsters... and repugnance being the chief characteristic of the Catholic discourse of monstrosity against the Protestant Reformation' and that 'An explanation of this difference may well lie in the emphasis on the apocalypse in the Lutheran Reformation and repudiation of eschatology in Catholic polemic'.<sup>36</sup> Although Po-chia Hsia is right that there were differences in interpretations of monstrosity and that these were coloured by confessional allegiances, English Catholics did not reject eschatology and a concern about the End was contained in Catholic polemic.

In a different text of the same year Stapleton once again suggested that Protestants were the false prophets prophesied in Matthew and the Apocalypse which would herald the End. In his *Fortresse of the Faith* Stapleton quoted Matthew 7 and eschatologically framed his argument. Stapleton argued that 'our Saviour biddith us *beware of false prophets, coming in shepes skinnnes, being inwardly ravening wolves*'.<sup>37</sup> He elaborated that 'Such false prophets are false teachers cloaked with the shepes skinne of a pretended faith, of the worde of God, of the ghospell: but inwardly... heinous heretiques, creull murderers of mens soules'.<sup>38</sup> In 1565 Stapleton was still using the language of heresy to describe Protestantism. This could have been because Stapleton was optimistic and expected his countries re-conversion to Catholicism. False prophets and heretical doctrine could be more easily abandoned and defeated by Catholicism than an alternative church. This would be similar to the reason of the reticence of Rome in identifying Protestantism as the False Church in the 1550s. However Stapleton had

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<sup>35</sup> H. C. Clarke, *The Gospel of Matthew and its Readers: A Historical introduction to the First Gospel* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> R. Po-chia Hsia, 'A Time for Monsters: Monstrous Births, Propoganda, and the German Reformation', in: L. Lunger Knoppers & J. B. Landes (eds.), *Monstrous Bodies / Political Monstrosities in Early Modern Europe* (London, Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 71.

<sup>37</sup> T. Stapleton, *A Fortresse of the Faith* (Antwerp, John Laet, 1565), fol. 6r.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

moved further in his eschatological understanding of the Protestant Church by identifying them as the false prophets who would herald the End.

In 1565 there were also lectures at Louvain which linked Protestantism with the devil and potentially the Apocalypse. Harding and Stapleton's fellow exile, and later printer, John Fowler, translated, edited and printed the oration which Peter Frarin had given during his December lectures at the University of Louvain. In the preface to the reader Fowler described how Frarin was a 'learned man toward the Law' from Antwerp and that he had translated and printed the oration 'because I thought it no lesse profitable and fruteful, that, as that Oration is in Latine... so it should be in Englishe... to warne my deere Contremen'.<sup>39</sup> Folwer described how he had

conferred with [Frarin], and by his advise translated it into our Mother tong, with suche notes and farther additions as for lack of tyme, whe[n] he pronounced it, were omitted and leafte out in the Latine. Wherein I toke such leave and lybertie, as the Author... might be bolde to use him selfe in his owne doings... but never swarving any whit from the truthe.<sup>40</sup>

The text was therefore partly authored by Fowler and it is not clear which are Frarin's thoughts and which are Fowler's. The oration claimed that Catholics, for heavenly rewards, were 'contented gladly and pleased to suffer... the cruell tormentes and butchery both of the Divil him selfe and also at the hands of these his Garde and wayting yeomen, his members and most wicked ministers of hel'.<sup>41</sup> According to Frarin and Fowler Protestants persecuted Catholics at the direction of 'theyr Grand Captaine Lucifer'.<sup>42</sup> The supposed identity of the persecutors, rather than the persecution itself, is what is most striking. Protestants were not described simply as heretics or persecutors but rather the 'Garde and wayting yeomen' of the devil and 'his members and most wicked ministers of hel'. After the demonic nature of Protestants was established the text moved on to suggest a connection between Protestants and the apocalypse.

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<sup>39</sup> Anon. *An oration against the unlawfull insurrections of the protestantes of our time, under pretence to refourme religion Made and pronounced in Latin, in the Schole of Artes at Lovaine, the .xiiij. of December. Anno. 1565. By Peter Frarin of Andwerp, M. of Arte, and Bacheler of both lawes. And now translated [by John Fowler] into English, with the advise of the author* (Antwerp, John Fowler, 1566), sig. Aiiiv, sig. Aiiiir.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Aiiiir.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Hir.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, sig. H9v.

The authors presented their criticism as a prayer and used highly apocalyptic language. The text asked ‘what a wicked and Barbarous religion, or rather Ireligion, what a strange and rude Reformation, or rather Deformation is this, that pursueth with famine, fyer and sworde all good men, every where, and allwayes’.<sup>43</sup> The description of the Reformation as bringing widespread ‘famine, fyer and sworde... every where’ may allude to the Four Horses of the Apocalypse which were to be unleashed at the opening of the seven seals.<sup>44</sup> However, the order in the text, ‘famine, fyer and sworde’, does not correspond to the order in the Apocalypse of conquest/pestilence, sword, famine, death and then fire. This could suggest that the text was describing Frarin and Fowler’s perception of contemporary affairs rather than suggesting an apocalyptic link. Nevertheless, this is not clear as Fowler admits the work is his own translation from Latin with omissions and this could have meant that word order was sometimes confused. The fact that Fowler was printing a work which used highly apocalyptic language and connected Protestantism with the False Church of the devil is significant. If a theme was mainstream one could expect to find it expressed in works Fowler was involved with. These three authors – Harding, Stapleton and Fowler – may suggest that the reticence of Rome in publically identifying Protestantism as the eschatological False Church cast a long shadow. All three are suggestive and make their arguments about the present within an eschatological framework. This suggests that an eschatological understanding may have been circulating amongst the English exiles. However, in the mid-1560s all three refrained from making an explicit identification during their co-ordinated printed attack on the Church of England.

Another important English exile in the Jewel Controversy whose works were printed by Fowler was Nicholas Sanders. Based in Louvain, when Protestants argued that the Roman Catholic Church was the False Church of Antichrist, Sanders met this argument with the contention that the Protestant Church was in fact better suited to this identification. Sanders declared in 1567 that ‘the Catholiks ... doe passe the Protestants in al manner of Signes and Marks of Christes true Church’ and instructed his readers that ‘Gods word is not a sufficient mark of the true Church’.<sup>45</sup> Sanders believed that the Bible was not enough for Christians to understand God’s will because people could not agree on what God’s word was. For Catholics it was the written word combined with the traditions written by the Holy Ghost in people’s

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, sig. liiiv.

<sup>44</sup> Apocalypse 6:1 – 8, Apocalypse 8:5.

<sup>45</sup> N. Sanders, *Rocke of the True Church* (Louvain, 1567), sig. \*ijr, sig. \*iiijr.

hearts which enabled salvation.<sup>46</sup> To deny one aspect was to fall into damnation and this exposed the identities of the True and False churches. Sanders was clear that ‘The religio[n] presently authorized in the realm [of England]... [is] so far of[f] from Christes true religio[n], as it is far from Christ’.<sup>47</sup> The claim that ‘it is far from Christ’ was a shrewd argument regarding the recent emergence of Protestantism and that it could not be the True Church because it was so new. It was a more delicate version of ‘where was your Church before Luther’ but the subtlety of the argument did not undermine its potency.

Sanders used points of doctrine to argue that the Protestant Church was the eschatological False Church. For example, the preface to *A treatise of the images of Christ* contained a ‘Brief Declaration, Which is the true Churche of Christ’.<sup>48</sup> This shows how for Catholics, as well as Protestants, the identity of the True Church was central to Reformation debates. Sanders, like his other exiled co-religionists, aimed to convert Protestants with his text. He claimed that he wanted to ‘speake to them who, being not altogether sette upon self will, are content to heare evide[n]t reason grounded upon *Gods word*’.<sup>49</sup> Sanders, Harding, Stapleton and Fowler were part of the same literary offensive against English Protestantism and all of these authors had eschatological undercurrents running through their arguments. Sanders argued that the visibility of the Catholic Church in the world was the primary sign that it was the Church of Christ. This was because

Christ being himself the *true light of the world*, communicated some of his brightnes to his Apostles... when the Apostles died, the Church of Christ died not, so Bishops and Pastours did succeed in their place: whose Churches are as it were the Candlesticks... For that the churches be as it were candlesticks, the Angel expoundeth in the Apocalips.<sup>50</sup>

Sanders’s reference to Apocalypse 1 in the margin may suggest that the Apocalypse spoke to contemporary Catholics. Alongside answering Protestant challenges Sanders looked to the Apocalypse to understand his own age. He argued that ‘this miserable division of Christes Churche (which toward the coming of Antichrist is like daily to increase) thei only are safe,

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, sig. \*iiijv.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, sig. \*ijr.

<sup>48</sup> N. Sanders, *A treatise of the images of Christ and of His Saints* (Louvain, 1567), sig. \*iir.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, sig. 7r.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, sig. \*iiiv.

who follow that notable fame, glory, and knowen authoritie of the Catholike faith'.<sup>51</sup> Sanders was talking about contemporary events but using the Apocalypse as a guide to the True faith. Sanders used the Apocalypse to undermine Protestant arguments.

The climate for English Catholics in the 1570s was set by the failure of the Northern Rising of 1569 and the Bull of Excommunication in 1570. Intended to assist the Northern Rising, the Bull *Regnans in Excelsis* released all English subjects from their obedience to the Queen but did not arrive until after the rebellion had failed. Pius charged that 'the number of the ungodly has so much grown in power that there is no place left in the world which they have not tried to corrupt with their most wicked doctrines'.<sup>52</sup> He accused Elizabeth of 'prohibiting with a strong hand the use of the true religion' and claimed that she had 'instituted false preachers and ministers of impiety'.<sup>53</sup> *Regnans in Excelsis* provided papal support for direct criticism of Elizabeth and alluded to the idea that the growth of Protestantism was eschatological. The increase of the ungodly was suggestive of the Great Apostasy before the End, while the notion that true religion had been suppressed suggested that Protestantism was the False Church.<sup>54</sup> The reference to false preachers and impious ministers supported the suggestion because Protestantism was considered to be not just another heresy but a Church. However, there was still a level of reticence in publically naming the English Protestant Church as the False Church of the End. One reason why the identification was not explicit but rather alluded to could be because the Catholic Church did not want to encourage a quick and rash action. The Bull was originally intended to support a rising which was co-ordinated and had leaders. A declaration that the English Church was the False Church may have caused uncoordinated attacks and a heavier backlash making future action more difficult to succeed. The Catholic Church could have lost control of any potential rising and be pushed to the periphery of decision making. The reluctance to publically state the eschatological nature of the English Protestant Church could also have been a means of preserving deniability in case there was political change in the future. For example, the leadership of the Catholic Church denied all responsibility for the St. Bartholomew's massacre but Pope Gregory XIII celebrated

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, sig. \*iv.

<sup>52</sup> Papal Encyclicals Online, 'Regnans in Excelsis'  
<<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius05/p5regnans.htm>>  
[Accessed 10/03/14].

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> The Great Apostasy and the End is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, pp. 72 – 78.

it.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the Catholic Church did not censor individuals or works which suggested or named the Protestant Church as the False Church of Antichrist. This in turn subsequently encouraged a steady trickle of these ideas to enter England and circulate amongst English Catholics.

The texts from the 1560s continued to circulate and remain important while in the 1570s new texts were produced which reinforced their arguments.<sup>56</sup> The exile, translator and Catholic controversialist Richard Bristow contributed to the debate around the True and False Church in his 1574 treatise. Bristow argued that the tradition of the Catholic Church's ceremonies established a link back to Christ and the Apostles. Bristow claimed that this showed that the Catholic Church could not be the False Church as it was established by Christ. Bristow contrasted this with the foundation of the Protestant Church and concluded that it had its origin in Antichrist. Bristow claimed that 'ours is the Church that foloweth the steppes of Christ and his Apostles, and theirs to be the heire of the Arrians, and other damned Heretikes, a lymne and Messenger of that lost sonne Antichrist'.<sup>57</sup> Bristow informed his English readers that

wee, who have for our Preachers and Religion such confirmation from God, are of Christ our Lord, and that the Protestants, & Puritans, which utterly are destitute of all such confirmation, are not of Christs sending, but they come of ther owne head, by the instigation of... The enemye man.<sup>58</sup>

Bristow was clear and quoted Matthew 24 that 'Many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many out of the way'.<sup>59</sup> Another passage from the work made the link between Protestants and the Apocalypse explicit when it argued

Take us (say they to the Catholikes) for your Authors, us for your Leaders, us for your Interpreters: & upon our word, condemne yee the things that you held, hold yee the thinges that you condemned, cast

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<sup>55</sup> To celebrate the massacre Gregory XIII ordered a *Te Deum* to be celebrated, a commemorative medal to be struck and three frescos to be painted by Giorgio Vasari in the Sala Regia.

<sup>56</sup> Nicholas Sanders was sending his *Rocke of the True Church* to English Catholics in 1572, see: Kew, The National Archives, SP 70/122 fol. 63.

<sup>57</sup> R. Bristow, *A briefe treatise of divers plaine and sure waies to finde out the truth in this doubtfull and dangerous time of heresie* (Antwerp, John Fowler, 1574), fol.44v.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 32v.

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 87r.

away the old faith, the father's teachings, the thinges that your Elders left you to keepe... This... was the croking of those Egypticall frogs, while they were living, which now are quackling & yalping with the Divels in Hell, fro[m] whence they came, as Saint John Apocalips beareth witnesse.<sup>60</sup>

This passage highlights how Catholics, as well as Protestants, employed images and arguments of inversion when they grappled with the question over the identity of the Two Churches. When Bristow described Protestant teaching as 'the croking of those Egypticall frogs' he referred directly to Apocalypse 16:13, adding 'as Saint John Apocalips beareth witnesse'. Bristow's description of Protestantism as 'Egypticall frogs' underscores the eschatology of the frogs in Stapleton's image of the 'Tree of Heresy' discussed earlier. This also related the Apocalypse to Bristow's own time and placed contemporary events in an eschatological time frame as well as linking Protestantism to Antichrist.<sup>61</sup> This shows that in the 1570s Catholic scholars such as Bristow continued to argue in print that the Protestant Church was the False Church of Antichrist.

Bristow's friend and colleague, the Douai educated Catholic priest Gregory Martin shared a similar opinion with him in 1578. Gregory Martin was the main translator of the Bible into English for English Catholics assisted by Bristow, Thomas Worthington, William Rainolds and William Allen. Martin was a significant figure in the mission to reconvert England and assisted Allen in founding the English College in Rome. In 1578 in his *Treatise of Scisme* Martin highlighted the polarised nature of the True and False church debate when he claimed that 'He that is not with Christ, pertaineth to Antichrist. Marke'.<sup>62</sup> For Martin, one was either of the Church of Christ or the Church of Antichrist. Martin warned his readers that 'The misteries of iniquitie doth worke, or is in working even nowe as it did in al heresies downwarde, but... Then the sonne of iniquitie shalbe revealed, when the day of our Lorde is at hande: then

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<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 68v.

<sup>61</sup> The 'unclean spirits like frogs' emerge out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the false prophet gathering evil ready for the great battle with God. see: R. K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Washington, University of Washington Press, 1982), p. 23.

<sup>62</sup> G. Martin, *A treatise of schisme Shewing, that al Catholikes ought in any wise to abstaine altogether from heretical conventicles* (Duaci [London], Apud Iohannem Foulherum [W. Carter], 1578), sig. H.V.3r.

(toward ye latter dayes) he shal come with his maine force'.<sup>63</sup> Although Martin was certain that the 'misteries of iniquitie... is in working even nowe' he appears to take a futurist approach to the revelation of Antichrist and his preordained defeat. The 'latter dayes' were described as a future 'then' rather than a present 'now' by Martin. However he did view the two as linked. As we have seen in earlier Catholic assessments of Protestantism, the 'misteries of iniquity' appear to be a prelude to the revealing of Antichrist. However in the same text Martin alleged that 'The mark of heretikes' was the 'character bestiae. Apo. 19.' which was often considered to symbolise Antichrist, and 'of Catholikes signu Ezech. 9.'<sup>64</sup> This identification was important for salvation, as Martin asked 'If both beare one marke, howe shal Christ sai... I knowe my sheep'.<sup>65</sup> This suggested that the marks were divinely attributed and irreversible, adding further weight to his argument that Catholics would endanger their souls if they conformed. Alex Walsham has claimed that recusancy propaganda fostered 'a confident conviction that Catholicism's very survival demanded resistance and reprisal, that its post-Reformation identity could only be generated by disdainful opposition and tireless antagonism towards the ecclesiastical status quo'.<sup>66</sup> However, the works considered in this chapter, while encouraging recusancy, were not primarily concerned with the survival of Catholicism but rather placed greater emphasis on the individual's eternal destiny. The survival of Catholicism would be both a necessary prerequisite and a consequence of human salvation. They were works of polemic and conversion and the theme of the eschatological significance of the choice between Protestantism and Catholicism runs through them and was used to encourage separation.<sup>67</sup> Harding, Stapleton, Fowler, Sanders, Bristow and Martin all show that apocalyptic arguments surrounding the identity of the True and False churches in early modern England were not just the preserve of Protestants.

The 1580s in England began with a seemingly ominous earthquake and the Jesuit Mission led by Edmund Campion and Robert Persons.<sup>68</sup> This set the tone for the decade as

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<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Iiiijr.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Cij.1.r.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Cij.1.r.

<sup>66</sup> A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1993), p. 34.

<sup>67</sup> The role of eschatology in encouraging separation from the Church of England is discussed in more detail on pp. 78 – 87.

<sup>68</sup> That this encouraged an eschatological mood in England please see: A. Walsham, A. Walsham, "This Newe Army of Satan": The Jesuit Mission and the Formation of Public Opinion in Elizabethan England', in: D. Lemmings and C. Walker, *Moral Panics, the Media and the Law in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 41 – 63.



from its inception the Jesuits as an Order had eschatological undertones.<sup>69</sup> This is shown in the meditation on the Two Standards which Ignatius of Loyola devised in his *Spiritual Exercises* to bring people to a firmer foundation of faith.<sup>70</sup> These meditations are important for understanding the Jesuit Mission and each individual Jesuit's worldview because every Novitiate had to complete the *Spiritual Exercises* before admittance into the Society of Jesus. Ignatius combined his military background with a passage from Job to depict the world as continuous warfare between good and evil.<sup>71</sup> The marginal note to Job in the Catholic translation of the Bible may give further insight to Jesuit self-perception. It argued that 'A souldier must be always readie to indure travel, to be promptly obedient, content to be beaten by his superior without al resistance, upon paine of his life... must ever be readie to dye'.<sup>72</sup> The martyrological texts analysed later in this thesis show that this was an idea which was taken to heart.<sup>73</sup> The Jesuits perceived themselves as eschatological warriors gathered under the Standard of their commander, Christ. The Two Standards were flags with Christ as one commander and Satan the other while one had free will to choose who to follow. The imagery created by Ignatius in the meditation on the Two Standards was reminiscent of Apocalypse 16:12-16 where demons gather Satan's forces and the kings of the earth to partake in a final battle with Christ and his followers. We know early modern English Catholics used Apocalypse 16 to describe Protestantism because Campion's friends and associates, Richard Bristow and Thomas Stapleton, used it in their texts against English Protestantism.<sup>74</sup> This suggests that, on some level the Jesuit Mission of 1581 may have had an eschatological impetus. The Jesuit concept of Two Standards was also significant for ideas about the True and False Church. The Two Standards worked on the same notion that the world was fundamentally divided between good and evil and suggested an active and ongoing war between the two forces.

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<sup>69</sup> The apocalyptic undertones to missionary activities are discussed in chapter 6, pp. 202 – 214.

<sup>70</sup> Second Week, [136] Fourth Day, Ignatius St, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph*, L. J., S. J. Puhl (ed.) (Chicago, Loyola Press, 1951).

<sup>71</sup> Job 7:1: 'The life of man upon earth is a warfare, & his daies, as the daies of an hyred man'

<sup>72</sup> *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 1070.

<sup>73</sup> Martyrdom, eschatology and 'militant passivity' is discussed in chapter 6, pp. 196 – 233.

<sup>74</sup> The frogs at the roots of the 'Tree of Protestant Petigrew' suggest Apocalypse 16:13 in: F. Staphylus, *The apologie of Fridericus Staphylus counsellor to the late Emperour Ferdinandus, &c. Intreating of the true and right vnderstanding of holy Scripture. Of the translation of the Bible in to the vulgar tongue. Of disagreement in doctrine amonge the protestants. Translated out of Latin in to English by Thomas Stapleton, student in divinite. Also a discourse of the translatour uppon the doctrine of the protestants which he trieth by the three first founders and fathers thereof, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and especially John Calvin* (Antwerp, John Latius, 1565), fols.127v – 128r, R. Bristow, *A briefe treatise of divers plaine and sure waies to finde out the truth in this doubtfull and dangerous time of heresie* (Antwerp, John Fowler, 1574), fol. 68v.

As well as the Jesuits, seminary priests trained on the Continent had been steadily entering England to administer to the hidden Catholic flock. William Allen, founder of the English College, and one of the driving forces behind attempts at England's reconversion to Catholicism described Protestantism in 1581 as the result of 'false private spirits of error' which Catholic tradition was given by the Apostles in the scriptures to protect against.<sup>75</sup> Alongside this, the war of words between Protestant and Catholic divines was still ongoing as they continued to discuss points regarding the True and False churches. In his *Reply to Fulke Bristow* claimed that Protestants were 'but the Apes of the Catholike Church, in so much as they retayne of her Service and other orders: leaving it to the consideration of the learned in the Scriptures and other writings, that false Religion was always the Ape of true Religion'.<sup>76</sup> This language was suggestive of a competing, demonic, eschatological Church because it was the same language which was used to discuss the figure of Antichrist. Similar to the Jesuits, Allen may thus have viewed the world as fundamentally divided and the Protestant Church as the eschatological False Church.

The perception that Protestantism was the eschatological False Church was taught in the marginalia and annotations to the 1582 Catholic translation of the Bible. Undertaken by Gregory Martin with the assistance of scholars and theologians such as Thomas Stapleton, Richard Bristow, William Rainolds and Thomas Worthington, the New Testament was published in 1582 and the project completed with the publishing of the Old Testament in 1609 to 1610. This version of the Bible was intended to correct Protestant errors and provide Catholics with their own English version of the Scriptures. What is interesting is that the book of the Apocalypse was used to understand contemporary affairs. The prophecies of the End were surrounded by questions of the present. For example the marginalia to the opening chapter of the Apocalypse argued that 'There be many (specially now a daies) that be great readers, hearers and talkers of scriptures but that is not ynough to make them good or blessed before God'.<sup>77</sup> It is noteworthy that the present time was specified and singled out. The annotations to the second chapter explained 'the cause why God taketh the truth from certaine

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<sup>75</sup> W. Allen, *An apologie and true declaration of the institution and endeavours of the two English colleges, the one in Rome, the other now resident in Rhemes against certaine sinister informations given up against the same* (Mounts in Henault [Rheims, Jean de Foigny], 1581), fol. 56r.

<sup>76</sup> R. Bristow, *A Reply to Fulke, In defense of M. D. Allens scrool of articles, and booke of purgatorie perused and allowed by me Th. Stapleton* ([Lovaine [East Ham], John Lion [Greenstreet House Press], 1580), fol. 316r.

<sup>77</sup> 'Apocalypse', marginalia, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 698.

countries, and removeth their Bishops or Churches into captivitie or desolation is the sinne of the Prelates and people. And that is the cause (no doubt) that Christ taketh away our golden candlestick, that is, our Church in England'.<sup>78</sup> The book of the Apocalypse was being used by Catholics to explain the Reformation in England and encourage action against Protestantism. The annotation to chapter two taught that John 'warneth Bishops to be zealous against false Prophets and Heretickes... by alluding covertly to the example of holy Elias that in zeale killed 450 false prophets of Jezebel, and spared not Achab not Jezabel themselves, but told them to their faces that they troubled Israel'.<sup>79</sup> This was incredibly suggestive, particularly if it was combined with the idea that Elizabeth was Jezebel.<sup>80</sup> The notion that God's prophets, such as John of Patmos, used allusions to communicate the intricacies of the divine plan may explain to some extent why early modern Catholics considered throughout this thesis appear to allude to ideas but on many occasions do not state things explicitly.

In the 1590s the full force of the penal legislation enacted the previous decade was being felt. Mary Queen of Scots had been executed and the armada had failed which further diminished the hope of recusant families and increased scrutiny of their activities. Nevertheless, English Catholic exiles on the continent continued to work towards the restoration of Catholicism in England. In 1591 the exile John Pauncefoote translated Jean de Caumont's apologetic work *The firme foundation of Catholike religion, against the bottomles pitt of heresies* to be printed by Coninx for Richard Verstegan and smuggled into England. John Pauncefoote came from a once wealthy recusant family who lived at a manor, Pauncefote Court, in Hasfield in Gloucestershire. Pauncefoote was forced into exile in 1584 because of his Catholicism rather than taking up his privileged social position and family estate. The apologetic work he translated complained of 'false Prophetes which runne without sendinge'.<sup>81</sup> Caumont recommended that 'A heretike, before all other thinges should be asked not what he sayth, but of whom he is sent, and the marke of his sending'.<sup>82</sup> This was an important

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<sup>78</sup> Apocalypse, Chapter II, annotation 5. *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 703.

<sup>79</sup> Apocalypse, Chapter II, annotation 20, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 704.

<sup>80</sup> The identification of Elizabeth I as Jezebel is discussed in chapter 4, pp. 124 – 161.

<sup>81</sup> J. de Caumont, *The firme foundation of Catholike religion, against the bottomles pitt of heresies wherin is shewed that only Catholiks shalbe saved, & that all heretikes of what sect so ever are excluded from the kingdome of heaven. Compyled by John Caumont of Champany: and translated out of French into English, by John Pauncefote the elder Esquyre, in the tyme of his banishment* (Antwerpe, Arnold Coninx, 1591), p. 7.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

distinction, particularly because of Protestantism's claim to be a return to the Scriptures. If preachers were not sent by God then they must necessarily have been sent by the cosmic enemy, the devil. As Caumont explained, 'never [was a] heretike sent of God, they are of the spirit of the devil, and al condemned of God, what [ever] allegation so ever they make of the holie scriptures'.<sup>83</sup> The supposed 'marke of his sending' was a reference to the different marks of the True and False Church, reinforcing the notion that Protestants were the false prophets of the eschatological False Church. Daniel Timmerman, in his investigation into Protestant views, has concluded that 'Against the background of the late medieval eschatological mind-set, it is understandable that many contemporaries considered Luther as a prophet of the end times'.<sup>84</sup>

In *An apology against the defence of schisme* the English Jesuit Henry Garnet went further still and considered Protestants to be the locusts of the Apocalypse described in chapter nine. Garnet argued that 'S. Ambrose upon the 9. chapter of the Apocalipse, comparing the heares of the caterpillers unto the hereticall Churches' said that

The Locusts had heares of wome[n]. for as ye Saincts of the Church of God had theire flockes which at certaine times did come together to celebrate ye divine services: So also heretickes had theire madde and furiose people, which in diverse places came together, to the celebration not of divine misteries, but of develish services.<sup>85</sup>

In 1593 Garnet viewed current heretics to be of the False Church gathered to worship the devil and saw the Apocalypse as containing symbols to explain the present. However, what in the Apocalypse symbolised Protestantism was not fixed and in 1599 the notion that Protestants were the frogs of Apocalypse 16 was re-circulated with the reprinting of Bristow's *Briefe treatise of divers plaine and sure waies*. That there was no fixed or dominant Catholic interpretation of what exactly in the Apocalypse symbolised Protestantism may be one reason that it has appeared that Catholics did not view the advent of Protestantism eschatologically. Ideas were harder to pin point and pin down. Nevertheless, despite the wider range of

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> D. Timmerman, *Heinrich Bullinger on Prophecy and the Prophetic Office* (1523 – 1538) (Gottingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), p. 46.

<sup>85</sup> H. Garnet, *An apology against the defence of schisme Lately written by an English diuine at Doway, for answere to a letter of a lapsed Catholicke in England his frend: who hauing in the late co[m]mission gone to to [sic] the Church, defended his fall. Wherin is plainly declared, and manifestlye proued, the generall doctrine of the diuines, & of the Church of Christ, which hitherto hath been taught and followed in England, concerning this pointe* (London, Fr. Garnet's first press, 1593), pp. 198 – 199.

interpretations there was a persistence and continuity in Catholic thought. English Catholics in the decades following the Reformation, such as Harding, Stapleton, Fowler, Sanders, Bristow, d'Albin de Valsegques, Martin, Allen, de Caumont and Garnet viewed Protestants as the eschatological false prophets stirring the predicted False Church.

### **The Great Apostasy**

One event prophesised to precede the Second Coming was the Great Apostasy. Taken mainly from Matthew 24: 10 -14 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12 it was predicted that there would be a great falling away from the faith during the time of, or in preparation for, Antichrist. This large scale departing would be a clear sign that the End had begun. Early modern English Catholics were concerned with the Great Apostasy and some were of the opinion that Protestantism fulfilled this prediction and subsequently was a sign that the age of Antichrist was approaching. For early modern Catholics such as Harding one of the clearest indicators that the Protestant Church was the False Church was that they had actively departed from the Catholic faith. Harding invoked the Gospel of John in 1565 when he described the effect of the Reformation and claimed that

Before Luthers time al christen people came together peaceably into one church, under one head, as shepe into one folde under one shepeherd, and so lyved... in one accorde. But after Satan who at the beginning begyled Eve, had persuaded some to tast of the poisoned apple of Luthers newe doctrine: *they went out from us, who were not of us...* [and] forsook the catholike church of Christ, sorted themselves into synagoges of Antichrist, withdrew themselves from obedience toward their Pastor and Judge.<sup>86</sup>

Harding compared Luther to Satan and suggested that Protestantism was the second fall of humankind, similar to the first fall in the Garden of Eden. Once again we see the idea of Protestantism as a 'newe' Gospel and thus the argument being propounded of 'where was your Church before Luther'. Harding explicitly stated that Protestants had sorted themselves into the 'synagoges of Antichrist'. The destruction of Catholic unity and apostasy from the church was thought to be a Scriptural sign of Antichrist and antichrists based on 1 John 2:19 which

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<sup>86</sup> T. Harding, *A confutation of a booke intituled An apologie of the Church of England* (Antwerp, 1565), fol. 8v.

claimed that “They went out from us”: but they were not of us’.<sup>87</sup> This reflected the epistle’s audience as the author was writing to those who already believed the Christian message but were concerned over the potential dangers of heterodoxy and heretical teachings. The reference to Antichrist reinforced the idea that the world was in the End and the Protestant Church was a clear indicator of this.

Similarly, in 1567 in Louvain the exiled priest Nicholas Sanders claimed that a religious and political falling away were to be expected as the Great Apostasy before the Second Coming of Christ. Sanders argued that ‘(Christ saith, he shal not come to judge the world) unlesse the departing come first, and the man of sinne be revealed’ and that ‘Antichrist shal not come, before the Roman Empire be clean taken away’.<sup>88</sup> Although Sanders did not explicitly identify Protestantism as the Great Apostasy, this explanation was written in a text attacking Protestants and defending the Catholic Church. Sanders claimed that it was the Roman, and thus Catholic, Church which held back the coming of Antichrist, ‘for so much doth S. Paule signifie by those words: And now ye know what with holdeth, or what letteth the co[m]ming of Antichrist, verily the Roman Empire’.<sup>89</sup> Therefore a large departing from the Catholic Church would bring about the arrival of Antichrist and the end of the world. Sanders explained that the ‘departing is meant, when all nations and cou[n]tries shal depart whollie from the Roma[n] Empire. For that it must be a ful departing, it appeareth, because it is the Emperour himselfe who staieth the co[m]ming of Antichrist, and who must be taken out of the way’.<sup>90</sup> The idea that it was a necessary part of the divine plan for a Roman emperor to be destroyed may suggest that Sanders held a critical opinion of the religious policies of the then current Holy Roman Emperor, Maximillian II. In 1564, three years before Sanders wrote his text, Maximillian II had succeeded Ferdinand I to become the Holy Roman Emperor. The Catholic Maximillian pursued a policy of religious toleration, aimed at creating a united force to repel the Ottomans from Hungary, and did not attempt to suppress Protestantism in his domains. Alternatively, Sanders could have been describing a departing from Papal rule as the section of the text that the argument around Apostasy and the End was taken from explained why the Pope could not

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<sup>87</sup> First Epistle of John, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 678.

<sup>88</sup> N. Sanders, *The Rocke of the Church: Wherein the Primacy of S. Peter and his Successours the Bishops of Rome is proved out of Gods Worde* (Lovain, 1567), p. 439.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

be the Antichrist. With either identity of the Roman Emperor Sanders suggested that Protestantism was the great departing before the Second Coming.

Despite the fact that Sanders was not clear who the Holy Roman Emperor which would be departed from was, Sanders did consider the rise and expansion of Protestantism as part of the beginning of the Great Apostasy and thus an eschatological event. Sanders claimed that ‘when the tyme is ripe, then the iniquity, which is now begun must be fulfilled, and so is the whole religio[n] destroyed’.<sup>91</sup> Sanders implied that the final iniquity had been begun by Protestants, but placed the fulfilment, in the form of the revelation of Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ, in the future. This suggests that Sanders may have interpreted Protestantism as the seed of the Great Apostasy because he believed it could lead to the eventual destruction of the Catholic faith. The notion that this threat would ripen over time reflects the fact that Sanders was writing at the end of the 1560s. Sanders was an English exile writing for a specifically English audience with the hope to covert his country back to Catholicism.<sup>92</sup> Elizabeth had only been on the throne for nine years when this text was written and the recent past showed how quickly religious change could occur.

The reticence about naming Protestantism as the Great Apostasy continued into and through the 1570s. For example, the exile and Catholic controversialist Richard Bristow shows through the language he used in his 1574 text that he primarily considered Protestants to be schismatics and heretics rather than the Great Apostasy.<sup>93</sup> However in the same text Bristow did move closer towards the idea of Protestantism as the Great Apostasy. Bristow claimed that ‘the church having now bene a certaine time... did arise into their Apostasie’.<sup>94</sup> A few pages earlier Bristow had referenced 2 Timothy 4 in the margin and instructed readers that ‘S. Paul likewise [says]... Some wil departe from the faith’.<sup>95</sup> This is significant as Bristow was explicitly referencing two texts from the Bible which clearly argue that a Great Apostasy will occur before the end of the world. In the 1560s and 1570s, as Protestantism was solidifying its

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<sup>91</sup> N. Sanders, *The Rocke of the Church: Wherein the Primacy of S. Peter and his Successours the Bishops of Rome is proved out of Gods Worde* (Lovain, 1567), p. 563.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, sig. \*ijr.

<sup>93</sup> R. Bristow, *A briefe treatise of divers plaine and sure waies to finde out the truth in this doubtfull and dangerous time of heresie* (Antwerp, John Fowler, 1574), fols. 85v – 86r.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 88v.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 85v.

ascendancy in England, the Catholic perception that Protestantism may be the prophesied Great Apostasy signalling the arrival of the events of the End was building. It took time and experience to recognise that Protestantism was not going to disappear any time soon or be geographically limited.

By 1580 Bristow had begun to clarify his position and more firmly interpret the emergence and spread of Protestantism as the Great Apostasy. Bristow argued in his *Reply to Fulke* that ‘your Heresie is so like to the foresaid Apostasie, that but for one place in ye Apocalypse I would boldly pronounce (with my Mother and Mystresse the Churches leave) that it is even the selfe same’.<sup>96</sup> As well as suggesting that Protestantism may be the Great Apostasy it is significant that Bristow claimed to have had the Church’s permission for his identification. This text was printed and therefore the message was more public than a manuscript which could suggest that by 1580 Catholics such as Bristow and the Catholic Church as an institution was more confident in its assessment that Protestantism was the prophesied Great Apostasy. This also shows that Catholics were publically engaging in eschatological questions and publicising their eschatological view. Bristow’s work was directly addressed to the Protestant divine William Fulke and was one reply in an ongoing controversy between Fulke and Catholic scholars. Bristow argued that

Besides much more that I have (if I were the opponent here, and not the answerer) to prove your Apostasie, and that in all the thrée species of Apostasie, béeing these, Apostasie from Religion Monasticall, Apostasie from holy Orders, Apostasie from our Christian faith.<sup>97</sup>

Bristow claimed that in this text he had shown ‘that it is not so much an Heresie, as a plaine Apostasie from Christ, that the Protestants have brought in under the name of ye Gospel... Which it were good for all men to thinke earnestly upon, before it be to late’.<sup>98</sup> The notion that soon it would be too late to repent is interesting as it could suggest that Bristow believed that the End was rapidly approaching. Bristow’s work highlights how eschatological understandings of the present were therefore in dispute and that Protestants did not have an unchallenged monopoly concerning eschatological thought. Bristow didn’t just accuse

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<sup>96</sup> R. Bristow, *A Reply to Fulke, In defense of M. D. Allens scrool of articles, and booke of purgatorie perused and allowed by me Th. Stapleton* ([Lovaine [East Ham], John Lion [Greenstreet House Press], 1580), fol. 130r.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.* fol. 132r.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 380r.



Protestantism of being the Great Apostasy but explained why he believed it to be which reveals an early modern English Catholic viewpoint yet to be explored by historians.

Bristow compared Protestantism to the predictions contained in the Apocalypse and thus contemporary events to the apocalyptic prophecies. Bristow argued that the emergence and spread of Protestantism was a sign that the world was

in the first Vae, under the first Angell trumpeter. For the second Vae, under the sixt Angel, is playnly of Antichrist. And ye third or last Vae, under the seventh and last Angell, is playnly of Domesday. Therefore the first vae must be the next thing immediatly before Antichrist.<sup>99</sup>

This would suggest that Bristow had a historicist understanding of the Apocalypse. Bristow made it clear that he was applying the biblical predictions of the Great Apostasy to Protestantism but left it open to his reader to decide for themselves. He argued that

seeing it hath bene Prophecied, that one certayne heresie, and that towards the end, should so farre pricke beyond all other heresies, according also to the fourth Trumpet béeing compared with the third, that it should be not onely an heresie, but also a playne Apostasie: whether the same be not this present heresie of yours, let the world judge.<sup>100</sup>

Alongside this suggestion Bristow referred his readers in the margin to Apocalypse 8 which underscores that he was applying the book of the Apocalypse to his own age. This reference and application to Protestantism implies Bristow may have understood his era to be after the opening of the seventh seal and experiencing the events of the seven trumpets. Bristow was in fact more specific about where he viewed his era in relation to the apocalyptic predictions. He claimed that

such being your New invented Gospell, in this time of the fourth Trumpet, no doubt they that embrace the same, wil as readily embrace the next in the time of the fifth Trumpet, and againe as readily...

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<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.* fol. 132r.

embrace Antichrist him selfe in the time of the Churches sixth  
Trumpet Angelicall.<sup>101</sup>

This text made clear that Bristow perceived Protestantism to be an eschatological sign and the world to be experiencing the End as forewarned by the Apocalypse.

Bristow was not the only English Catholic in the 1580s to have argued that Protestantism was an eschatological sign. The English Catholic exile Richard Hopkins perceived Protestantism to be the loosening of the devil from his bounds signalling that the world would end shortly. Hopkins warned his readers that ‘this greate rage of his [the devil] is the more to be feared in this our corrupte age, for that we reade also in Sainte Johns revelations, that the Devill shalbe let lose towards the ende of the worlde for a small tyme’.<sup>102</sup> It is noteworthy that Hopkins was time specific in his application of the Apocalypse. Protestantism was significant for this interpretation as it was Protestantism’s emergence which confirmed the author’s outlook that the end of the world would shortly arrive. This contests Richard Bauckham’s assessment that ‘the apocalypticism of the sixteenth century belonged to the unworldly strain of sixteenth-century religion’.<sup>103</sup> Hopkins was concerned with what was happening on earth. The dedicatory epistle was a Catholic historicist approach to the Apocalypse, an approach which was underlined by Hopkins’s reference to Apocalypse 12:12 in the margin alongside his description of contemporary events.<sup>104</sup> Hopkins quoted the verse ‘Woe be to the lande, and sea, because the Devill is descended unto you, havinge a greate rage, for that he knoweth he hath but a shorrt tyme’.<sup>105</sup> This repeated emphasis on a ‘shorrt tyme’ suggests that Catholics, as well as Protestants (and independently from Protestant assertions), held that the End was impending even if Catholics, in contrast with Protestants, did not attempt to predict a specific date or year. Hopkins’s choice of apocalyptic text also suggested that he viewed the Catholic Church as the Woman clothed with the Sun. It is interesting that in 1580

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<sup>101</sup> *ibid.* By the time of the fourth trumpet the apocalyptic star, Wormwood, had already fallen to earth. During the fourth trumpet the earth could expect eclipses and disruptions to the heavens.

<sup>102</sup> R. Hopkins, ‘Epistle’, Luis de Granada, *Of prayer, and meditation Wherein are conteined fowertien devoute meditations for the seven daies of the weeke, bothe for the morninges, and eveninges. And in them is treyted of the consideration of the principall holie mysteries of our faithe* (Paris, Thomas Brumeau, at the signe of the Olyve, 1582), sig. aijv.

<sup>103</sup> R. Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford, Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), p. 12.

<sup>104</sup> Historicist exegesis is defined and explained in the introduction, pp. 3 – 4.

<sup>105</sup> R. Hopkins, ‘Epistle’, Luis de Granada, *Of prayer, and meditation Wherein are conteined fowertien devoute meditations for the seven daies of the weeke, bothe for the morninges, and eveninges. And in them is treyted of the consideration of the principall holie mysteries of our faithe* (Paris, Thomas Brumeau, at the signe of the Olyve, 1582), sig. aijv.

Bristow understood England and the world to be undergoing the fourth trumpet yet two years later a fellow English Catholic, Richard Hopkins, believed that the world was now two chapters ahead in the apocalyptic drama and after the seventh trumpet. This suggests that contemporary events, and particularly the Jesuit mission of 1580 to 1581 had an impact upon apocalyptic understandings of the present.<sup>106</sup> This movement through the chapters of the Apocalypse may allude to the idea that Robert Persons and Edmund Campion were considered by some Catholics to be the Two Witnesses of Apocalypse 11. This in turn supports the idea that early modern English Catholics were comparing their own age to the predictions contained in the Apocalypse and viewed Protestantism as an eschatological event.

### **Separation**

The perception of Protestantism as the Great Apostasy which would prepare the way for Antichrist and the view of the world as fundamentally divided between the forces of God and the forces of evil meant that separation became a necessity for individual salvation. The survival of the Catholic Church in England would be a necessary result of this separation. Separation was a crucial theme in the Apocalypse and was the focus of passages in Apocalypse 2, Apocalypse 14 and Apocalypse 18.<sup>107</sup> Separation from the ungodly was also insisted upon in Matthew, 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians.<sup>108</sup> As attendance at Church of England services became a test of loyalty to the Elizabethan regime, separation became a political act. Did an eschatological worldview provide a political undercurrent in early modern English Catholicism? There was a spectrum of conformity and movement in between periods of separation and phases of attendance by individuals. The legal obligation to attend Protestant services began with the Act of Uniformity in 1559 which entailed a fine of 12d for non-attendance on Sundays and Holy days. This was sharpened and extended under the 1581 Act which imposed a fine of £20 for each lunar month of absence.<sup>109</sup> A 1586 Act tightened the mechanisms of detection and enforcement while the 1593 Act for restraining Popish recusants threatened fiercer penalties. Separation could attract the suspicion of one's local community and ultimately the authorities. It could affect trade with neighbours and one's position within

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<sup>106</sup> Protestant apocalyptic understandings of the mission have been explored, see: A. Walsham, "This Newe Army of Satan": The Jesuit Mission and the Formation of Public Opinion in Elizabethan England", in: D. Lemmings and C. Walker, *Moral Panics, the Media and the Law in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 41 – 63.

<sup>107</sup> Apocalypse 2:1- 6, Apocalypse 14:9 – 10, Apocalypse 14:12, Apocalypse 18:4 – 5.

<sup>108</sup> Matthew 25:32, 1 Corinthians 10:21, 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 15, 2 Corinthians 6:17.

<sup>109</sup> 23 Elizabeth I.

the local community. Charges of recusancy could be used maliciously against competitors and enemies or be brought against those who had not attended because of a variety of reasons, such as attending the alehouse instead, not simply Catholicism. The term recusancy can also distort our understanding of what it meant to be Catholic in early modern England. Indeed, early modern Catholics did not understand themselves as such, as Richard Bristow claimed, ‘we never went out’, it was the Protestants who were schismatics and thus attendance at a False Church could not be expected or commanded.<sup>110</sup> Michael Questier has analysed how recusancy was a ‘negotiable quantity’ and the language of the law created a boundary where the categories of conformity and recusancy met and the limits were tested.<sup>111</sup> Questier has argued that recusancy was not the only way to challenge Protestant religious authority in this period and that both ‘recusancy and Church papistry were... forms of behaviour through which Catholics might continue to confront Protestants... by arguing about what conformity signified’.<sup>112</sup> Church papistry, in the form of either persistent conformity or occasional conformity was widespread. Alexandra Walsham’s study into this experience of Catholicism has shown that Elizabethan Catholicism was ‘a religious culture of dissent marked in practice by a decisive degree of co-operation and compromise’.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, contemporary polemic certainly encouraged separation from Protestants in the strongest terms. Looking at the eschatological undertones of these works adds another layer to our perception of how their English Catholic readers could understand their relationship with the Church of England.

An eschatological understanding of Protestantism in England being the False Church caused some Catholic clerics to adopt a harder stance and advocate nonconformity as the ideal to be pursued. In 1566 Laurence Vaux instructed his Lancashire friends that ‘Ye that have followed me shall Christ say shall sit upon the seates judging the tribes of Isreal. And at the day of judgement Christ shall say ye be they which have tarried with me in my temptations and adversities. Therefore I dispose unto you a kingdom’.<sup>114</sup> Vaux was a Roman Catholic priest who went into exile in 1561 after his works caught the attention of the authorities. In

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<sup>110</sup> R. Bristow, *A briefe treatise of divers plaine and sure waies to finde out the truth in this doubtfull and dangerous time of heresie, Conteyning sundrie worthy motives unto the Catholike faith, or considerations to move a man to beleieve the Catholikes, and not the heretikes* (England, English Secret Press, 1599), fol. 16r.

<sup>111</sup> M. Questier, ‘Conformity, Catholicism and the Law’, in: P. Lake & M. Questier (eds.), *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c.1560-1669* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2000) p. 244, p. 250.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>113</sup> A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1993), p. 94.

<sup>114</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/41 fol.2v (Laurence Vaux to his Lancashire Friends, 2 November 1566).

1566 Vaux visited Rome where Pope Pius V forbade Catholic attendance at Protestant services, something Vaux was to communicate to Nicholas Sander and Thomas Harding who the Pope had appointed apostolic delegates for England. The message of non-attendance was to be spread to all Catholic priests in England, a task which Vaux and William Allen undertook until arrest warrants and the threat of detection forced them back to Louvain in 1567. Vaux returned to England at Allen's urging in 1580 and was shortly arrested, and likely died in the Clink in 1585. Vaux communicated the idea in 1566 that non-attendance, especially by priests, was critical to Catholics and the Catholic cause. Vaux cited Matthew 25:33 when he claimed that 'your good examples... may not be [the] salvation of our own souls but upon your examples dependeth the salvation of a great number of the simple that know not the right hand from the left'.<sup>115</sup> Vaux was not the only Catholic to orientate his argument for the need to be distinct from Protestants towards Judgement Day. In 1567 Sanders instructed his readers not to attend Protestant services and threatened that 'others shal know... at the later day, what it is to *believe the Catholik Church*; whether it be to read or to speak that which it beleveth, or else to practice also and to doe that which the Catholik Church doth and commandeth to be done'.<sup>116</sup> The timing of Vaux's mission is striking as Elizabeth was not excommunicated until 1570 and in 1566 we have an example of a Pope ordering English Catholics to disobey the law. This questions the broadly accepted narrative that Catholic dissent began with the 1569 Northern Rebellion and expanded with the Jesuit mission of the 1580s. Peter Holmes has argued that 'The Rising of the Northern Earls and the bull of excommunication had provided the stimulus for an ideological change in the early 1570s'.<sup>117</sup> Holmes has claimed that there was a distinct chronological rhythm to this ideological change and the period between 1558 and 1568 was characterised by both political non-resistance and 'Half-hearted non-resistance'.<sup>118</sup> Although there was a chronological rhythm to expressions of resistance, Vaux highlights the fact that there wasn't a swift ideological change but that it was more a process of ideological crystallisation. That Vaux was instructed by the Pope to communicate the necessity of separation to Sanders and then both Vaux and Sanders constructed their

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<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, Vaux was citing Matthew 25:33 which described how on the Day of Judgement all nations will be gathered and the blessed separated from the damned, the parable of the sheep and goats taught that the saved were to go on the right hand of God while the damned were to go on the left.

<sup>116</sup> N. Sanders, *A treatise of the images of Christ and of His Saints* (Louvain, 1567), sig. A4v, sig. A7r

<sup>117</sup> P. Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 129.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

arguments for separation from Protestantism around ideas of Judgement Day may suggest that this was the position that was recommended by Rome.

During the 1570s two leading figures of Catholic erudition and controversy, Richard Bristow and Gregory Martin, presented separation as an eschatological imperative. Bristow, the first prefect of studies appointed by William Allen at Douai, argued that ‘now are wee upon the stage, our course also very nere at ha[n]d to be called of... to give accompt how we played our partes: yea every day and houre some of us served with such citations’.<sup>119</sup> Bristow combined polemic with a common Catholic devotional eschatology in the tradition of the Four Last Things to move between a position of universal Judgement to individual Judgement. Bristow maintained that ‘They that will not be drowned with them in Hell, [should] come out of Egypt in the name of God with the children of Israel’.<sup>120</sup> Bristow conceived of Protestantism as more than a heresy or schism and saw it as an active denial of Christ.<sup>121</sup> Catholics, in Bristow’s view, were not passively conforming to Elizabethan legislation but were actively worshipping devils and furthering the False Church. For Bristow Judgement was approaching and his concept of human choice and participation in one’s own salvation made excuses redundant.

Bristow’s fellow exile Gregory Martin was also an important proponent of active Catholic resistance in the form of separation and his most direct work on the subject, *A treatise of schism*, was driven by a strong eschatological understanding. The fates of the members of the True Church and the False Church were compared and contrasted to encourage English Catholics into a position of non-compromise. Martin argued that it was ‘not just glorious, but necessarye, to confesse our faith openly... He that denieth me before me[n], I wil also denye hime before my father and his Angels’ and that ‘To be saved we must confesse with our mouth in time of heresie’.<sup>122</sup> The notion of Christ denying one before ‘my father and his Angels’ was a direct reference to Judgement Day and may suggest the parable of the wise and foolish

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<sup>119</sup> R. Bristow, *A briefe treatise of divers plaine and sure waies to finde out the truth in this doubtfull and dangerous time of heresie, Conteyning sundrie worthy motives unto the Catholike faith, or considerations to move a man to beleve the Catholikes, and not the heretikes* (England, English Secret Press, 1599), sig.\*Vr.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, sig. \*\*ijr.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 134r.

<sup>122</sup> G. Martin, *A treatise of schisme Shewing, that al Catholikes ought in any wise to abstaine altogether from heretical conuenticles, to witt, their prayers, sermons* (Duaci [iLondon], Apud Iohannem Foulurum [i.e. W. Carter], 1578), sig. Av.

virgins.<sup>123</sup> This is important because the parable ends with a warning that one was to keep watch because one knew not the hour of the Lord's Second Coming. Martin therefore added urgency to the separation of Catholics from Protestants because the time of the Day of Judgement was unknowable but potentially soon. One could conform once, but risked that the day one conformed would also be the day of the Second Coming. Martin warned that through conformity 'you are taken for such [members of the False Church], although you be not such, and you shalbe punished with them' and cited Apocalypse 18 in the margin.<sup>124</sup> This is significant as Martin may have viewed the Church of England, and possibly England itself, as the apocalyptic Babylon. Indeed, Martin instructed his readers to 'Goe out from her (meaning Babilon, which signifieth heresie) my people, that you be not partaker of her sinnes, and that you receave not of her plagues'.<sup>125</sup> Martin thus used salient apocalyptic language which implied that Protestantism was the apocalyptic city. Martin further drew on the Apocalypse to describe his own age and compared English Catholics to the apocalyptic church of Laodicea. He stated that he 'would thou were colde or hot... no dissembler, but a plaine dealer one way or the other. But because thou art luke warme, and neither cold nor hot, a neuter, earnest in neyther, I will beginne to spewe thee out of my mouth'.<sup>126</sup> Martin's use of apocalypticism and the uncompromising categorisation that it entailed highlights the schism between some ordinary lay Catholics and some clerical viewpoints. Many ordinary Catholics performed the minimum required by the law in order to protect their lives, families and assets and thereby developed a faith characterised by practical compromise. Martin questioned, 'Who knoweth not that colde Catholikes come to Churche in England upon this false principle: We must obeye a lawe?'<sup>127</sup> The term 'colde Catholikes' was once again a reference to Laodicea and as well as encouraging more open resistance amongst Catholics would have targeted Protestant fears over duplicity. It supports the idea that Catholicism was more widespread than the records attest to and was a multifaceted faith combining separation, church papism, mission and exile as different forms of resistance. Although contact and compromise with Protestantism certainly existed in Elizabethan England it shifted the apocalyptic identity of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was not only conceived of as either the True Church or the apocalyptic figure of the

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<sup>123</sup> Matthew 25: 1 – 13.

<sup>124</sup> G. Martin, *A treatise of schisme Shewing, that al Catholikes ought in any wise to abstaine altogether from heretical conuenticles, to witt, their prayers, sermons* (Duaci [London], Apud Iohannem Foulrum [i.e. W. Carter], 1578), sig. A.iiijr.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, sig. A.iiij.v, It is in Apocalypse 18 that the Angel declares that Babylon is fallen and commands the people of God to depart from her so as not to partake in her sins and suffer her plagues.

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*, sig. AV1r.

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

woman in the wilderness but the picture is much fuller as it was identified as the apocalyptic Church of Laodicea by those that wished to argue for greater and more public resistance.

One of the driving forces behind the English mission of 1580-81 and appointed the superior of it, Robert Persons, argued against Catholic conformity and used the Apocalypse to explain its necessity. He claimed that

Christ him selfe in the Apocalipes commendeth much the Angel of Ephesus, for his good woorkes, labours, patience, and for many things besides... but yet, for being imperfect in some thinges... he is commanded to repent quickly, under the payne of leeing his candelsticke, that is of leeing his vocation, and his place in the book of lyfe, so unspotted wil God have our service to be.<sup>128</sup>

Persons was looking at the fate of the churches of the Book of the Apocalypse as examples for his own age. Whether or not he considered the early modern Catholic Church to be one of the churches described in the Apocalypse is unclear in this statement. Persons did not explicitly say that the Catholic Church in England was the Church of Ephesus. However, it is suggestive that Persons repeatedly turned to the Apocalypse and arguments surrounding Judgement Day to urge Catholics not to conform. For example, Persons described the second reason why Catholics refused to go to Church as because it was a ‘scandal’.<sup>129</sup> In his explanation of the sin of scandal Persons invoked the Apocalypse claiming that

this heinous sinne of scandale consisteth... First to induce an other man by any meanes to sinne... Christ spoke against with great disdayne in the Apocalipse, saying. Thou hast their certayne which hould the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balaac how to geve a sca[n]dale of Isreal to sinne. I wil fight against those men with the sworde of my mouth.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> R. Persons, *A brief discours contayning certayne reasons why Catholiques refuse to goe to church. Written by a learned and vertuous man, to a friend of his in England. And dedicated by I.H. to the Queenes most excellent Maiestie* (East Ham, Green Street House Press, 1580), fols. 64v – 65r.

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 9r.

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*, fols. 9v – 10r.



Persons was referencing the warnings given to the apocalyptic churches of Pergamos and Thyatira.<sup>131</sup> Invocations of Balaam or Balaac were also indirect references to Babylon and Jezebel and referred to Apocalypse 2:20. This may indicate that Persons was of the opinion that England was Babylon and subsequently Elizabeth I was the apocalyptic Jezebel.<sup>132</sup> That this was the second use of the apocalyptic Churches by Persons, in the same text, casts light on his understandings of the present. Persons generalised the sins of the churches of the Apocalypse and did not make a specific identification between the contemporary Catholic Church and an individual apocalyptic Church. This may suggest that Persons had an eschatological worldview but did not wish to antagonise his audience.

The date of the text, 1580, places it in the context of the English mission and means that as well as being a text intended to support Catholics in England it could also have been designed to convert Protestants and those wavering between the two faiths. It would be more difficult to convert those one had declared damned. Yet Persons was clear that Protestantism led to damnation at Judgement Day. Persons insisted that Catholics refused to go to Church because they would ‘rather venture both body and goodes, lyfe, lands, libertye and all, then they will doe any thinge contrary to theyr consciences whereby they must be judged at the last daye’.<sup>133</sup> This statement had a double intention as it both praised and supported those Catholics who were suffering for separation and contained an inherent threat to conformist Catholics. Persons constructed his arguments regarding conformity and separation, and therefore the mission, in an eschatological framework and placed present decisions in light of future judgement. Robert Zaller has made a convincing argument that this public uncompromising stance was a deliberate provocation to the Elizabethan regime intended to force matters to a head. Zaller has claimed that ‘principled avoidance of the established church would have been indistinguishable from casual absence’ and therefore Catholics would lose their group identity.<sup>134</sup> It placed conformity into the sphere of activity of the Catholic Church as a sin which had to be remitted before judgement, but this also showed that some level of conformity was expected as a practical necessity. However the apocalyptic spectrum through which many

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<sup>131</sup> Apocalypse 2:12 – 17, Apocalypse 2:20.

<sup>132</sup> The identification of Elizabeth I as Jezebel is discussed in chapter 4, pp. 124 – 161.

<sup>133</sup> R. Persons, *A brief discours contayning certayne reasons why Catholiques refuse to goe to church. Written by a learned and vertuous man, to a friend of his in England. And dedicated by I.H. to the Queenes most excellent Maiestie* (East Ham, Green Street House Press, 1580), fol. 2r.

<sup>134</sup> R. Zaller, *The Discourse of Legitimacy in Early Modern England* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 109.

early modern Catholics viewed their world is absent from Zaller's understanding. This apocalyptic lens is vital as it suggests that one reason Catholic leaders made this deliberate provocation to the regime was to publicly expose the True and False Church. The identity of the Catholic Church in England as the persecuted True Church would become evident while the Protestant regime would be clearly shown as the persecutors. With their characteristics visible this could encourage further separation as the idea of conformity as a necessary evil changed to joining with a malignant force.

At the end of the 1580s Robert Southwell, one of the leaders of the third Jesuit Mission to England which had begun in 1586, echoed earlier texts and was clear that Catholic attendance at Protestant services was 'moste sinnfull and damnable'.<sup>135</sup> He entreated English Catholics to 'Flye out of the middest of *Babylon*... and save your soules'.<sup>136</sup> Once again we have a printed Catholic source which compared England to Babylon and would have thus knowingly insinuated the apocalyptic connections.<sup>137</sup> Southwell added even greater authority to his eschatological arguments for separation as he suggested that this was what the Catholic Church as an institution believed. Southwell claimed that the leaders of the Catholic Church, gathered 'in the laste *Tridentine* Councell', had agreed that

dyvers heretickes shalbe witnesses againste you [Catholic conformists] in the daye of Judgement, who with letters and sett treatises have by many Scriptures proved it to be unlawfull, for one of a true beleefe to frequente... the service or sacramentes of a false church.<sup>138</sup>

Southwell maintained that the church leaders 'desired, not to make this a publicke decree, in respect of the troubles that might aryse to the Catholickes in England'.<sup>139</sup> This change from omitting that Catholic Church leaders agreed in 1562 that the Protestant Church was the eschatological False Church to circulating this in print in 1587 highlights the changing

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<sup>135</sup> R. Southwell, *An epistle of comfort to the reverend priestes, & to the honorable, worshipful, & other of the laye sort restrayned in durance for the Catholicke faith* (Paris [i.e. London, John Charlewood? in Arundel House, 1587), fol. 173v.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 177v.

<sup>137</sup> This instruction is recorded in Jeremiah 50:8, Jeremiah 51:6 and Apocalypse 18:4.

<sup>138</sup> R. Southwell, *An epistle of comfort to the reverend priestes, & to the honorable, worshipful, & other of the laye sort restrayned in durance for the Catholicke faith* (Paris [London, John Charlewood? in Arundel House, 1587), fol. 172v.

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*

circumstances for Catholics in England. The decision to disclose this information may show that Southwell felt that Catholicism was in danger of being wholly lost to conformity, or that Catholics in England were already troubled and thus there was not much risk in putting these details into the public domain. Southwell never claimed to have the Church's approval to disclose this information. Yet his role in the third Jesuit mission to England meant that he was in a position to have both knowledge of these arguments and a mind-set not to antagonise or damage the institution he was attempting to restore.

In the 1590s Southwell's colleague on the mission to England, Henry Garnet, continued to understand the Protestant Church eschatologically and argue for separation on this basis. Garnet described Protestant churches as the 'sinagogues of the Divell... as it were the divels visible congregations'.<sup>140</sup> Later in the text Garnet explained that he had drawn this name and understanding from the Apocalypse and outlined how the 'heretickes teare this into many Churches W[i]c[h] according to ye Apocalypse of S. JHON, are rather to be called Sinagogues of ye Devell, than congregations of Christ'.<sup>141</sup> Garnet argued that Catholics who attended Protestant services despite being inwardly Catholic were unified with the False Church. He claimed that

if Calvins Church be a visible Church... so that the persons therof were safe (unto the Prince of darkenes, from whom it first proceeded)... so ... also: that is it hath a visible unity, and what unity is this, but that w[i]c[h] the wholle world judgeth, a visible freque[n]ting of Calvins congregation?.<sup>142</sup>

Catholics who attended the Church of England were indistinguishable by sight from heretics and this was assisting Calvinists to claim their Church was successful. The spread of eschatological ideas surrounding Protestantism and separation from Protestants amongst different individuals and their continuation over time suggests that it was not a one person's, or even a couple of peoples', interpretation but a widespread understanding. The publication

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<sup>140</sup> H. Garnet, *An apology against the defence of schisme Lately written by an English diuine at Doway, for answere to a letter of a lapsed Catholicke in England his frend: who hauing in the late co[m]mission gone to to [sic] the Church, defended his fall. Wherin is plainly declared, and manifestlye proued, the generall doctrine of the diuines, & of the Church of Christ, which hitherto hath been taught and followed in England, concerning this pointe* (London, Fr. Garnet's first press, 1593), p. 92.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p. 92.

of eschatological ideas by leaders of the Jesuit mission implies that they were considered to have widespread appeal and that Garnet and Southwell thought that they would aid their objective of re-converting England.

## **Conclusion**

There was an initial reluctance to declare the Protestant Church the False Church as it would have meant raising Protestantism's status in England from that of heresy to a church. A lack of leadership from Rome cast a long shadow but writers based in Louvain and Antwerp were willing to make strong allusions to the eschatological nature of the English Protestant Church. During the 1560s some Catholics suggested that Biblical prophecies of the End and the rise of the False Church spoke directly to their age. The texts written by Harding, Stapleton, Fowler and Sanders suggest that an eschatological understanding of the present was circulating amongst the English exiles and that the debate about Protestantism in England was eschatologically framed. However, none went so far as to make an open identification during their co-ordinated printed assault on the Church of England. By the end of the 1560s one result of this controversial literature was action as it contributed to the Northern rising of 1569. Nevertheless, eschatology surrounded private thought but was absent in public proclamations. The 1570 Bull of Excommunication made no public declaration that Protestantism was an eschatological sign but the Catholic Church did not censor individuals or works which suggested or named the Protestant Church as the False Church of Antichrist. This permitted and encouraged a persistent drip of these ideas to enter England and disseminate amongst English Catholics. Apocalyptic and eschatological arguments surrounding the identity of the True and False churches in early modern England were not just the preserve of Protestants. However, there was no fixed or dominant Catholic interpretation of what exactly in the Apocalypse symbolised Protestantism. This may be one reason why it has seemed that Catholics did not view the advent of Protestantism eschatologically. Yet although there was a wider range of interpretations available to Catholics there was also a persistence and continuity in Catholic thought. English Catholics in the decades after the Reformation, such as Harding, Stapleton, Fowler, Sanders, Bristow, d'Albin de Valsergues, Martin, Allen, de Caumont and Garnet perceived Protestants to be the eschatological false prophets building the forces of the False Church which indicated that the End had begun.

Protestantism was understood to be the great departing from the faith predicted to occur before the Second Coming. There was however a reticence about naming Protestantism as the Great Apostasy which continued through the 1560s and 1570s. This changed in the 1580s as identifications became stronger and authors such as Bristow claimed to have had the Catholic Church's support for their arguments. As Catholic authors turned to the Apocalypse to understand the present there was a movement through the chapters of the Apocalypse and subsequently where in the apocalyptic timeline they placed the world. The notion that the Protestant Church was the eschatological False Church and predicted Great Apostasy meant that separation was vital for individual salvation, this separation, in turn, would result in the survival of the Catholic Church in England. Eschatological arguments for resistance and separation were being disseminated in the 1560s and over the next few decades these arguments crystallised. The practical contact and compromise with Protestantism in Elizabethan England shifted the apocalyptic identity of the Catholic Church. This created a wider range of opinions rather than one eschatological message. Leading figures of the Catholic Church and mission were making eschatological arguments for separation and this shows that eschatology and apocalypticism should not be consigned to the margins of early modern English Catholic thought.

The eschatological worldview fostered by devotional eschatology which was investigated in the previous chapter created an environment in which Protestantism was interpreted as an eschatological sign. The notion that the Protestant Church was the False Church led to Catholics questioning the identity of Antichrist and engaging with Protestant accusations that the Pope was this figure. The next chapter will explore the identification of Antichrist as a dialogue between Catholics and Protestants and show that there was not a Protestant monopoly on apocalyptic views of the present.



### **3: The Identification of Antichrist**

Both sides of the religious divide, Catholics and Protestants, in early modern England were animated by a concern about the identity of Antichrist. The emergence of Antichrist was an important part of apocalyptic thinking as it was the clearest indicator that the world was entering its final stage. The Antichrist had to be defeated by Christ before the Universal Judgement and members of his False Church condemned for eternity. In his study of apocalyptic beliefs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Bernard McGinn has concluded that 'Truly this was the age of Antichrist divided'.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Stuart Clark has claimed that 'The Antichrist debate, alive through most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was anything but one sided; it embraced... everything over which the two faiths disagreed'.<sup>2</sup> Peter Lake has argued regarding Elizabethan Protestants that 'It has to be remembered that the seemingly simple identification of the pope with Antichrist could imply a whole view of the world'.<sup>3</sup> It should therefore follow that Catholic identifications of Antichrist would also denote an apocalyptic world-view. However, there is limited historiographical research regarding early modern Catholic identifications of Antichrist and the subsequent Catholic apocalyptic world-view of which this was a manifestation.<sup>4</sup> In comparison, Protestant identifications of Antichrist have been studied as a hallmark of Protestant apocalypticism.<sup>5</sup> Although it is true that the identification of Antichrist was essential for the Protestant Reformation, this chapter will show that it was not just a Protestant concern. This chapter will consider the ideas surrounding Antichrist which early modern Catholics inherited from the Church Fathers and the Middle Ages. It will then briefly discuss the centrality of the identification of Antichrist to English Protestant identity as this shaped the wider context of early modern Catholics arguments. Lastly, this chapter will consider the early modern Catholic response to Protestants and early modern Catholic ideas surrounding the Antichrist.

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<sup>1</sup> B. McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of Human Fascination with Evil* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 201.

<sup>2</sup> S. Clark, *Vanities of The Eye: Vision in early Modern European Culture* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 181.

<sup>3</sup> P. Lake, 'The Significance of the Elizabethan Identification of the Pope as Antichrist', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 31, Issue 2 (April, 1980), p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 345.

<sup>5</sup> A. Cunningham & O. P. Grell, *The Four Horsemen of The Apocalypse* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 4.

### **Inherited Ideas: Church Fathers and the Middle Ages**

The term Antichrist does not appear in the Apocalypse. However it became central to apocalyptic thought. The emergence of the Antichrist became a vital component of the events of the End in medieval and early modern Christian interpretations of what was to occur in the Last Days or Age. The tradition of an eschatological opponent has a long history in human thought dating back to the combat myths in the ancient Near East but it was with Christianity that the idea of an Antichrist emerged. Within the Christian tradition, the term Antichrist was first used in the Johannine Epistles and it was not used again until the writings of Irenaeus nearly 100 years later. Irenaeus fixed Antichrist as an important figure in the events of the apocalypse and vital in understanding the last times. Gregory Charles Jenkins has argued that ‘it is not likely that Irenaeus and the writers of the third century were introducing novelties. On the contrary, they assumed that their readers had at least heard of the Antichrist figure’.<sup>6</sup> Jenkins has claimed that the ‘use made of the Apocalypse by later writers from Irenaeus onwards, in which Antichrist interpretation was consistently read into the text is... significant’.<sup>7</sup> Irenaeus argued that the Antichrist ‘shall work error among the people, gathering them from the ends of the earth; and he shall stir up tribulation and persecution against the saints’.<sup>8</sup> The characterisation that Irenaeus gave to the Antichrist figure is particularly interesting in a post-Reformation context when Catholics were facing the rise and spread of Protestantism. Irenaeus’s work on the Antichrist and the Apocalypse was of principal importance because of the ‘significance of the silence of the Apocalypse on the subject of the Antichrist’.<sup>9</sup> The silence in the book of the Apocalypse on the figure of Antichrist is significant because it not only left room for interpretation but invited it. Both Beasts in Apocalypse 13 have anti-Messiah characteristics and thus can be understood as forms of antichrist, but nothing concrete is said on the figure of Antichrist predicted in the epistles of John. This interpretive space was filled in early Christianity by Irenaeus who set the terms of understanding Antichrist’s position in the end of the world. Roughly half a century later Lactantius brought the dialogue of inversion to the forefront of discussions of the Antichrist and cemented ideas surrounding a world turned upside-down at Antichrist’s coming. In book VII of his *Divine Institutes* Lactantius argued that ‘neither law, nor order... shall be preserved... no one shall... recognise the duty of piety, nor

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<sup>6</sup> G. C. Jenkins, *The Origins and Early Development of the Antichrist Myth* (Berlin, Gruyter, 1991), p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>8</sup> Irenaeus, *The Writings of Irenaeus*, Rev. A. Roberts & Rev. W. H. Rambaut (trans.), vol. II (London, Hamilton, 1869), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> G. C. Jenkins, *The Origins and Early Development of the Antichrist Myth* (Berlin, Gruyter, 1991), p. 230.



pity sex or infancy; all things shall be confounded and mixed together against right, and against the laws of nature'.<sup>10</sup>

We can perceive the words of these patristic authors echoing through conceptions of Antichrist down the centuries and re-emerging in various guises in the early modern period. The patristic authors created an apocalyptic framework for both Catholic and Protestant understandings of contemporary events while the concern about Antichrist's identity expressed by both Protestants and Catholics alike denoted an apocalyptic world-view. As Clark has contended 'the need to identify the Antichrist's whereabouts would not itself have been such a vital matter without more general hopes and apprehensions concerning the last times'.<sup>11</sup> The Reformation itself engendered an apocalyptic understanding of the present and this was guided by two theological giants: Augustine and Aquinas.

The notions about Antichrist which, as we shall see, were expressed by early modern English Catholics were not new creations by their authors or entirely rooted in the Bible but rather had been inherited from the patristic fathers and the theologians of the Middle Ages. Richard Emmerson has argued that 'it is impossible to describe a standard and widely accepted understanding of Antichrist'.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless,

considering all the details... connected with the tradition, the medieval view was relatively consistent in the following important aspects: Antichrist will be a single human, a man with devilish connections who will come near the end of the world to persecute Christians and mislead them by claiming that he is Christ, he will be opposed by Enoch and Elias, whom he will kill, and finally be destroyed by Christ or his agent.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes*, bk. vii, ch. 17, in: Lactantius, *The Works of Lactantius*, W. Fletcher (trans.), Ante-Nicene Library (25 Vols.; London, 1867-97), vol. xxi, p. 468.

<sup>11</sup> S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 338.

<sup>12</sup> R. K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Washington, University of Washington Press, 1982), p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

The figure of Antichrist flourished in the Middle Ages and was driven partly because of the scholastic work on Christology and expressing the nature of Christ by determining the nature of Antichrist. Also, Antichrist as a figure was believed to subsume all human evil and sin into one individual, providing a ready opportunity for discussion of each individual evil and sin. Antichrist became an important figure for instructing people in Christian morality. Emerson has claimed that, 'In the later Middle Ages, stories and predictions of Antichrist and opinions concerning his signs, deceits, and persecution of the church circulated so freely and widely that Antichrist became one of the most important figures of medieval apocalyptic thought'.<sup>14</sup> It became established that Antichrist was the clearest sign of Christ's Second Coming and Judgement. The fifth-century writings of the North African Bishop and Church Father Saint Augustine of Hippo flourished in the Middle Ages and became a guide to Western orthodox understanding of matters of theology. While commenting on the first epistle of John in the *City of God*, Augustine declared that 'There is no doubt... that he said this... Christ will not come to judge the living and the dead unless Antichrist, His adversary, come[s] first'.<sup>15</sup> This statement by Augustine is particularly important because the works of Augustine were dominant in the early medieval centuries.<sup>16</sup> However Augustine added caution to identifying Antichrist and placed his arrival in the future. Adela Yarbro Collins has argued regarding Augustine's opinion of the millennial reign of Christ that even though Augustine understood the events of the end literally 'his spiritual interpretation of the present and his location of the end in the distant future significantly reduced speculations about the end and expectation of its imminent advent'.<sup>17</sup> As we will see later in this chapter, the voice, opinions and sometimes caution of Augustine were inherited by early modern Catholics.

The influence of Augustine continued in the later Middle Ages through the works of the influential Dominican friar Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas combined this interest in Augustinian theology with Aristotelian philosophy to produce one of the major works of his era, the *Summa theologiae*.<sup>18</sup> Aquinas was held in high esteem through the early modern period

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, R. W. Dyson (ed.), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), bk. xx, ch. 19, p. 1009.

<sup>16</sup> R. D. Crouse, 'Augustinian Platonism in Early Medieval Theology', in: J. McWilliam (ed.), *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian* (Ontario, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1992), p. 109.

<sup>17</sup> A. Yarbro Collins, 'The Book of Revelation', in: B. McGinn, J. J. Collins, S. Stein (eds.), *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* (London, Continuum International Publishing, 2003), p. 214.

<sup>18</sup> B. McGinn, *St. Thomas Aquinas's Summa theologiae: A Biography* (Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 1.

and was taught at Douai and Louvain, thereby exerting influence on early modern Catholic priests. As this chapter will show, this influence of Aquinas is detectable concerning early modern Catholic conceptions of Antichrist. It is therefore important to consider what Aquinas taught concerning the Antichrist. While discussing the grace of Christ in his reply under point eight Aquinas claimed that

antichrist is not called the head of the wicked, as if his sin had come first in the way the sin of the devil did. Likewise he is not called the head of the wicked because of his power to influence... It only remains, therefore, for him to be called the head of the wicked because he is the most accomplished in wickedness.<sup>19</sup>

Aquinas expanded and declared that ‘all other wicked people who came before him are, as it were, prefigurations of antichrist’.<sup>20</sup> These statements were important for understanding the relationship between the wicked and Antichrist across time. Antichrist was considered by Aquinas to be a real historical figure who would come to lead the wicked. Antichrist was to be the sum and total of human evil and the wicked expressed aspects of the Antichrist. Cornelius Ernst has drawn attention to Aquinas’s ‘insistence on traditional eschatology in the face of a powerful apocalyptic movement’.<sup>21</sup> Alongside this David Burr has pointed out that Aquinas, although convinced that the End would come, ‘had little sympathy for apocalyptic speculation’.<sup>22</sup> Aquinas was reacting against the followers of the Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore whose works had encouraged a renewed apocalyptic zeal and millenarianism. Joachim had argued that history was divided into three ages, corresponding to the trinity, and that the last age of the spirit was about to dawn ushering in a thousand years of peace. As Diane Watt has argued, ‘it would be hard to overstate the long-term impact of Joachim’s teleological vision’.<sup>23</sup> The apocalyptic and millenarian excitement of the age would have caused Aquinas to adopt caution in discussing identification of the Antichrist and this was a caution which early modern Catholics inherited regarding discussions of Antichrist.

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<sup>19</sup> St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, L. G. Walsh (trans.), vol. 49 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), The Grace of Christ 3a. 7-15, p. 79.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>21</sup> St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, C. Ernst (ed.), vol. 30 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), The Gospel of Grace, Ia2ae. 106-114, p. 234.

<sup>22</sup> D. Burr, ‘Mendicant Readings of the Apocalypse’, in: McGinn & R. K. Emmerson (eds.), *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (London, Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 102.

<sup>23</sup> D. Watt, ‘Medieval Millenarianism and Prophecy’, in: S. Hunt (ed.), *Christian Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco* (London, C. Hurst & co., 2001), p. 92.

In the later Middle Ages preaching and outpourings of popular eschatological excitement and predictions over the identity of Antichrist were met with scorn if not punishment. Apocalyptic expectations had been widespread and considered a dangerous provocation for social turmoil.<sup>24</sup> Subsequently, in the eleventh session of the Fifth Lateran Council in 1516 the preaching on the imminence of Antichrist had been banned.<sup>25</sup> The Council and Pope Leo X declared that even if the person in question had the authority to preach

They are in no way to presume to preach or declare a fixed time for future evils, the coming of antichrist or the precise day of judgment; for Truth says, it is not for us to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. Let it be known that those who have hitherto dared to declare such things are liars, and that because of them not a little authority has been taken away from those who preach the truth.<sup>26</sup>

Catholics inherited both an expectation of the arrival of Antichrist and caution about circulating and publicising their ideas. Alongside this early modern Catholics had witnessed in the rise and spread of Protestantism the damage the doctrine of the Papacy as Antichrist could do.

### **The Pope as Antichrist and English Protestant Identity**

Protestants and Catholics engaged in a printed discourse surrounding the identity of Antichrist, one of the main signifiers of the End. Protestants since Martin Luther alleged that a succession of Popes were Antichrist. Robert Bruce Barnes has argued that Luther was of principal importance for Protestant apocalypticism because it was Luther who ‘rejected the common notion that this final great enemy would be an individual person’ and thus made separation from the Roman Church the only viable option for salvation.<sup>27</sup> The notion of a papal Antichrist

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<sup>24</sup> O. Niccoli, L. G. Cochrane (trans.), *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 104.

<sup>25</sup> Papal Encyclicals Online, ‘Fifth Lateran Council 1512 – 17 A.D.’, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Councils/ecum18.htm> [Accessed 19/07/2016].

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> R. Bruce Barnes, ‘Eschatology, Apocalypticism, and the Antichrist’, in: D. M. Whitford (ed.), *T & T Clark Companion to Reformation Theology* (London, T & T Clark, 2012), p. 241.

was also supported by Calvinist teaching which spread in England.<sup>28</sup> Jean Calvin, in his commentary on the Catholic Epistle of 1 John which was first printed in English by John Kyngston in 1580, argued that ‘All the notes wherby y<sup>e</sup> spirit of God doth point out Antichrist, doo evidently appeare in the Pope’.<sup>29</sup> A work most likely authored by John Foxe implied that popes across the ages have been usurping authority, a feature of Antichrist. *A solemne contestation of diverse popes, for the aduansing of theyr supremacie* used a first person narrative constructed through papal bulls and decrees to direct the reader to the conclusion that the papal see was Antichrist.<sup>30</sup> Foxe used a bracketed German phrase to explicitly denounce the papacy, claiming

the Pope, say they, hath all the dignities & all power of all Patriarches.  
In his primacie he is Abell, In govermente the Arche of Noe, In  
Patriarchdo[n] Abraham, In order Melchisedech, In dignitie Aaron, In  
autoritie Moses, In seat iudiciall Samuel. In zeale Helias, In mekenes  
David, In power Peter, In unction Christ. (*Du bist das Antichrist.*).<sup>31</sup>

This text is noteworthy because it emerged from the press of John Day and we can therefore infer that it contained a message backed by the regime. John Day published this work ‘Cum gratia & privilegio Regiae Maiestatis’ and Day’s press was used by both William Cecil and Thomas Norton to circulate the regime’s message. The Protestant press was pouring forth works which proclaimed the same finding: that the papacy was the seat of Antichrist.

In 1560, the same year as Foxe’s work was printed, John Sleidans’ *Chronicles*, also known as his *Commentaries*, were published in an attempt to ground the Church of England historically. In the first book of his commentaries Sleidan argued from history that ‘Rome, then

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<sup>28</sup> See: A. Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600 – 1640* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 93, P. Lake, ‘The Significance of the Elizabethan Identification of the Pope as Antichrist’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 31, Issue 2 (April, 1980), p. 161.

<sup>29</sup> *The comentaries of M. John Calvin upon the first Epistle of Sainct Jhon, and upon the Epistle of Jude wherein accordyng to the truthe of the woordes of the holie Ghost, he most excellently openeth and cleareth the point of true justification with God, and sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, by the effects that he bryngeth forth in the regeneration.* Translated into Englishe by W.H (London, John Kyngston & T. East, 1580), fol. 31v.

<sup>30</sup> Anon. [J. Foxe], *A solemne contestation of diuerse popes, for the aduansing of theyr supremacie: quoted and collected faithfully out of their own canon law, according to the very wordes, stile, and tenor of the same theyr own canons, decres, decretales, clementines, extrauagantes, bulles, epistles, and commen glose vpon the same. Histories and stories of Romane bishops In forme and wordes, as their are to be seane, and found by the quotations here vnto annexed* (London, John Daye, 1560).

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, sig. E6.v. – E7.r.

is it no longer to be doubted of... is the very seate of Antechrist'.<sup>32</sup> The second book of his commentaries confidently claimed that 'eyther Antichrist doth now reigne, or els will come very shortly'.<sup>33</sup> Both the anonymous work and Sleidan's were propounding orthodox Protestant sentiments which, as Sleidan points out, originated with Luther. Sleidan argued that 'Luther aunswereth at large, and interpretynge certen places of Daniell, teacheth that the Byshoppes Tyrannye is there paynted out, and proveth that suche thinges as he hathe prophecied of the kyngdome of Antichriste, do altogether concerne the See of Rome'.<sup>34</sup> Lake has argued that 'this view of Rome provided the basis, not so much for a radical assault on contemporary society as a means of legitimating the activity and ascendancy of certain social groups in the workings of that society'.<sup>35</sup> The identification of the popes of Rome as Antichrist, which was at the heart of English anti-Catholicism, 'provided the perfect basis for a paen of praise for the achievements of the Protestant ruling class and the godly magistrate at their head'.<sup>36</sup> Stephen Alford's study of William Cecil has led him to stress that the conflict between Protestant England and Catholic powers was 'Cecil's mission for the rest of his career: light against dark, truth against lies, Christ against Antichrist'.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Malcolm Thorp has highlighted the relationship between Cecil's views on Antichrist and his treatment of Catholics in England.<sup>38</sup> Labelling the Pope Antichrist, and thereby Catholics members of the False Church, was a means of excluding the Catholic community from political life. There could be no compromise or accommodation with ultimate evil. The dialogue about Antichrist was a dialogue about political and religious exclusion. In Elizabethan Protestant hands the doctrine of the Pope as Antichrist moved from the spiritual realm into the political arena. The Pope became more than a deceiver and head of the False Church and was cast as a tyrant, usurping the godly magistrate's natural power. The date of both publications – 1560 – would intimate that the identification of the pope as Antichrist was part of an attempt to enforce the Act of Supremacy which had been passed in 1559 and conferred on Elizabeth the position of Supreme Governor

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<sup>32</sup>J. Sleidans, *A Famouse cronicle of oure time, called Sleidan's Commentaries concerning the state of religion and common wealth, during the raigne of the Emperour Charles the fift, with the argumentes set before euery booke, conteyninge the summe or effecte of the booke following. Translated out of Latin into Englishe, by Ihon Daus* (London, John Daye, 1560), fol. iir.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, fol. xix.v.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, fol. xxvii.v.

<sup>35</sup> P. Lake, 'The Significance of the Elizabethan Identification of the Pope as Antichrist', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 31, Issue 2 (April, 1980), p. 177.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>37</sup> S. Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, Yale University Press, 2008), p. 104

<sup>38</sup> M. Thorp, *William Cecil and the Antichrist*, in: M. R. Thorp & R. J. Slavin (eds.), *Politics, Religion and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Deleamar Jensen* (Truman State University Press, 2003), pp. 289 – 304.

of the Church of England. These efforts imply that the regime perceived a need to enforce the Act of Supremacy popularly and therefore we can infer that Catholicism was still vibrant in England. This in turn shows how vital the identification of Antichrist was for the English Reformation.

The former Protestant exile and later Bishop John Jewel had established himself as a champion of the Church of England when he preached his 'Challenge Sermon' at St. Paul's Cross on 26 November 1559. In this oration Jewel challenged Catholics to prove their position from the Bible and the Church Fathers, disputed the meaning of language regarding the mass and ignited what historians would view as the Great Controversy of the 1560s. Jewel followed this challenge with his *Apologia pro Ecclesia Anglicana* which was written during the Council of Trent and printed first in England in 1562, being translated into English that same year, before rapidly circulating on the continent. In his *Apology* Jewel, amongst other things, claimed that pope Pius IV, and previous popes, 'doothe contrarye to the olde Councils and contrary to the fathers... taketh to himself an arrogant, prophane, sacrilegious & Antichristian name: he is the kinge of all pride: he is Lucifer... he hath cast away faith, he is the fore runner of Antichriste'.<sup>39</sup> Jewel used the idea of the Pope as a forerunner of Antichrist to defend the political and religious break with Rome.<sup>40</sup> The notion that the Pope was 'the fore runner of Antichrist' would open up the possibility that future figures, either political or religious, could be identified as the Antichrist. The prime weapon, the identification of Antichrist, had not been closed off or used too early. Yet identifications of his forerunners still implied an apocalyptic worldview and expectation that the final Antichrist would come. Works such as Jewel's, as well as publicly praising the Church of England, were intended to convert Catholics to Protestantism. But they acted as a provocation and encouraged a Catholic response, a response which has hitherto been neglected in the historiography.

### **The Pope not the Antichrist**

Catholic works repeatedly made the point that the Pope, or succession of popes, could not be the Antichrist. A prime example of this is Nicholas Sanders's *Rocke of the Church* which

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<sup>39</sup> J. Jewel, *An apologie, or aunswer in defence of the Church of England concerninge the state of religion vsed in the same. Newly set forth in Latin, and nowe translated into Englishe* (London, Reginald Wolf, 1562), fols. 11.r. – 11.v.

<sup>40</sup> S. Tutino, *Law and Conscience: Catholicism in Early Modern England, 1570 – 1625* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007), p. 26.

devoted 145 pages in octavo format to proving this. Published in Louvain in 1567 and dedicated to Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and ‘al other protestants in the realme of Englande’, this text directly engaged with Protestant accusations.<sup>41</sup> The *Rocke of the Church* was an apology drawing on Scripture and the Church fathers, such as Augustine and Chrysostom, in order to win souls back to Catholicism. This in turn, and the fact that Sanders’s text addressed specific Protestant allegations, suggests that the argument that the Pope was Antichrist was perceived to have done a significant amount of damage to the image of the Catholic faith. In 1567 the text was distributed in both Latin and English. The predominantly English version shows that Sanders wanted to address the English layman, both Catholic and Protestant. However, it does include Latin and Greek quotations suggesting that his intended audience was primarily the literate elite. The publication date, 1567, makes Sanders’s experience of exile and forging of a new life for himself an important backdrop for the *Rocke of the Church*.<sup>42</sup> Biblically there was a strong link between exile and the End as the Old Testament prophecies predicted punishment and exile before redemption and the Apocalypse was written in exile on the island of Patmos. There was a connection between exile and messianic belief and it is not a large leap to ask whether there was a connection between exile and apocalypticism, especially identifications of the Antichrist. In the same year that the *Rocke of the Church* was printed Pius V issued a rescript conferring upon Sanders, as well as Thomas Harding and Thomas Peacock, ‘bishoply power in the court of conscience’ to reconcile those who had lapsed into heresy.<sup>43</sup> This rescript shows that Sanders had requested this permission and may suggest that he felt his arguments would win people back to the Catholic faith and that he had identified the crux of the matter in contention.

The *Rocke of the Church* was a discourse directed specifically at the former Marian exile and Bishop of Salisbury, John Jewel. The seventh chapter is entitled ‘The Authorities alleaged by M. Jewel to prove that S. Peter was not this Rock, prove against himself, that S. Peter was this rock’ and was arranged as a dialogue, with Sanders detailing Jewel’s argument

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<sup>41</sup> N. Sanders, *The Rocke of the Church: Wherein the Primacy of S. Peter and his Successours the Bishops of Rome is proved out of Gods Worde* (Lovain, 1567), sig. \*ijr.

<sup>42</sup> The role of exile in Messianic belief has been studied with regards to the Jewish diaspora, see: D. B. Ruderman, ‘Messianic Expectation’, in: A. Mirsky, A. Grossman, Y. Kaplan (eds.), *Exile and Diaspora: Studies in the History of the Jewish People Presented to Professor Haim Beinart* (Jerusalem, Instituto Ben-zvi, 1991), p. 187.

<sup>43</sup> The rescript is mentioned in: ‘Nicholas Sander’, *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vatican Arch., Var. Pol, lxvi, 258; Arm., 64, xxviii, 60  
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13435d.htm>  
 [Accessed 18/11/14].



first and then responding.<sup>44</sup> Jewel had based his argument that the Pope was the Antichrist on the idea that the popes of Rome had been usurping power for themselves, and Sanders retorted that ‘The Catholiques beleve, that the Bishop of Rome, sitting in S. Peters Chaier is, by the appointment of Christ himself, the chief Pastour of the whole militant Church, whose voice every sheepe ought to hearken unto’.<sup>45</sup> According to Sanders it was blasphemous and a sign of Antichrist to deny Christ’s command and authority in appointing the pope as his vicar on earth. He warned that ‘Happy then are we, who til this day communicate in faith with that Apostolike chaire. And wo to them, that cal the Apostolik chaire, the Seat of Antichrist’.<sup>46</sup> The identification of the Pope as Antichrist was not just a Protestant allegation but formed the linchpin of a dialogue which energised both Catholics and Protestants, theologians and laymen alike in the debates surrounding the End.

Sanders’s *Rocke of the Church* and other Catholic works dealing with the identification of Antichrist need to be understood in this context of confrontation. Sanders protested that

wheras there are three kinds of Antichrists, first the Devil, who is only a spirit, next, false teachers, thirdlie he that being possessed of the Devil, shal in the end oppugne Christes glory most of al in apparent shew, and in outward working: the question is not now, of the two first kinds, but o[n]ly of the last. to wit, *whether the Pope of Rome be this main and chief Antichrist, who was prophecied of to appere so singularlie toward the end of the worlde*.<sup>47</sup>

As is clear in Sanders’s work, analysis of the possible identity of Antichrist was often guided by Protestant thinking and it would appear that Catholics were answering rather than setting the agenda. However, Sanders used the space in his text before explicitly replying to Jewel’s charge to present a Catholic understanding of Antichrist. Sanders referred to the ‘three kinds on Antichrist’ which highlighted that he was going beyond the scope of Jewel’s initial challenge. Nevertheless, the Protestant challenge had created limitations and although in previous centuries Catholic theologians such as Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas had

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<sup>44</sup> N. Sander, *The Rocke of the Churche: Wherein the Primacy of S. Peter and his Successours the Bishops of Rome is proved out of Gods Worde* (Lovain, 1567), pp. 171 – 188.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 1 – 2.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p. 373.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p. 424.

expounded at length on the topic of the identification of Antichrist, what we see emerging amongst sixteenth-century English Catholics is a limited definition and identification, if one can call it an identification at all. Catholic thought was focused on proving the falsity of Protestant claims rather than an in-depth study of the figure of Antichrist. If Catholic authors seem to have spent less time on the figure of Antichrist than their Protestant counterparts this does not suggest less interest in the Antichrist than Protestants but rather should be understood in the context in which these works were written.

One of the arguments which Catholics used to defend the papacy from the Protestant identification of it as the Antichrist was the point that scripture and the Church Fathers taught that Antichrist was an individual and not a succession of individuals. Sanders claimed that

the common and certain judgement of all holy writers, that Antichrist (who is so notable prophecied of in Isaias, in Daniel, in the Gospels, in S. Paule, and in the Apocalypse) *is one certaine man*, But the Popes of Rome are not any one certaine man, but their succession is the continua[n]ce of a certain office, in which some hundreds of men have succeeded one after the other: therfore the Popes of Rome are not Antichrist.<sup>48</sup>

The arguments surrounding the identity of Antichrist implied that early modern Protestants had a flawed understanding of their faith. The notion that Protestants subscribed to *sola Scriptura* was being challenged by Catholics using ideas surrounding Antichrist as an example. The Protestants' argument that the entire institution of the papacy was Antichrist was, as pointed out by Sanders, in contradiction with Scripture, which claimed that Antichrist was an individual who would come in the End. A similar refutation was contained in the Douai-Rheims New Testament published 15 years later. A marginal note to chapter XII of the Douai-Rheims Apocalypse asserted that 'This often insinuation that Antichrists reigne shal be three yeares & a half (Dan. 7,25. Apoc. 11, 2,3 & in this chap. v. & c. 17, 5) proveth that the heretikes be exceedingly blinded with malice, that hold the Pope to be Antichrist, who hath ruled so many ages'.<sup>49</sup> The length of the papacy was directly contrasted with apocalyptic prophecies and the

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<sup>48</sup> N. Sanders, *The Rocke of the Churche: Wherein the Primacy of S. Peter and his Successours the Bishops of Rome is proved out of Gods Worde* (Lovain, 1567), pp. 430 – 431.

<sup>49</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 721

presence of this within the Douai-Rheims Bible suggests that the Catholic Church subscribed to a literal interpretation of Daniel and the Apocalypse. Emmerson has argued that ‘the Protestant identification of Antichrist with the papacy and Catholicism in general’ was revolutionary as it represented a ‘change in doctrine in which not merely some specific papal problem, but the papacy itself, [was] repudiated’.<sup>50</sup> This ‘revolutionary’ change in doctrine caused clerical Catholics to reaffirm the literal understanding of Antichrist, and therefore the Apocalypse, in order to negate it.

The durability of the papacy as an institution enabled Catholics, both clerical and lay, to resort to Scripture and its correspondence with history as a prime defence against Protestant charges. Documents belonging to Thomas Tresham discovered in the wall of Rushton Hall in 1828 contain a defence of the pope based on history. Included within a double-folio volume of theological and historical tracts is a handwritten piece entitled ‘Objections by m. B. against m. L.’. This was written between 1603 and 1605 and argued that the Pope could not be Antichrist because it was a Pope who sent Augustine into England in order to convert the country from paganism to Christianity.<sup>51</sup> The argument was made that the popes throughout history were responsible for bringing nations to the Christian faith, the opposite of Antichrist who it was foretold would pervert the faithful from the worship of Christ. ‘Objections by m. B. against m. L.’ is also interesting because it is set out as a public discourse with the author claiming that ‘The sayd m. L. in public assembly in ye parish church of B. upon sermon ended averred yt ye pope was not so great a foe to him as was M. B’ and that ‘That M. L. ... affirmed yt be reputed not ye pope to be Antichryste’.<sup>52</sup> Whether a Catholic confronted a preacher in front of the congregation of the parish church of ‘B’ over the identity of Antichrist is unknown and this may be a literary tool. Nevertheless, it is clear that both lay and clerical Catholics used history and the fact that the papacy was an institution rather than a single individual, combined with a literal understanding of Scripture, to defend the Pope against the Protestant charge that he was Antichrist. Catholics thus engaged with an apocalyptic understanding of the past and present.

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<sup>50</sup> R. K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Washington, University of Washington Press, 1982), p. 207.

<sup>51</sup> London, British Library, Add. MS 39830, fol.44r, (Tresham Papers, Vol. III, Objections by M.B. agaynst M.L., circ. 1603 – 1605).

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 43r.

### **Luther, Calvin, and Protestantism**

Learned Catholics did not identify either Luther, Calvin or Protestants as Antichrist, but rather as the forerunners of Antichrist. In the opinion of some post-Reformation Catholics, Luther and Calvin prepared the way for the final Antichrist by perverting the word of God. The theologian and religious exile Thomas Harding, who was later professor at Douai, refrained from identifying Protestants or a single figure as the Antichrist. Harding has been considered Jewel's most important opponent with the two men exchanging eleven works of polemic between 1559 and 1570.<sup>53</sup> Angela Ranson has claimed that the Jewel-Harding controversy 'had an immediate effect on the doctrine and practice of the Church of England'.<sup>54</sup> Likewise, Alan Stewart has interpreted the Jewel-Harding controversy as 'setting the tone for the ecclesiastical disputes that followed in the remainder of Elizabeth's reign, both Catholic-Protestant, and Puritan-Anglican'.<sup>55</sup> Harding published seven works in the vernacular during the 1560s which could indicate that he desired his works to reach ordinary Englishmen and women as well as the leaders of the Church of England whom he was confronting. This would suggest that his polemical works should also be considered works of conversion. This is important because of Harding's eschatological understanding of Protestantism and the apocalyptic debates in which he engaged with Jewel. Harding wrote from Antwerp in 1565 to refute Jewel's *Apology* that

Your ...argument, whereby ye would persuade your gospel to be the truth, is now... [that] almost the whole world doth beginne to open their eyes to beholde the light. This argument serveth marvellous wel for Antichrist. And truly if he be not already come, ye maye very well seme to be his foreronnors.<sup>56</sup>

This cautious approach to the identification of the Antichrist might have been a means of planting the seeds of doubt without antagonising the Protestants he wished to convert. The notion that if Antichrist had not already come then the rise of Protestantism indicated that he shortly would denotes an apocalyptic interpretation of the present. Harding did not accuse Jewel of being the Antichrist but of being a member of his forces by getting the world ready for his arrival through the teachings of Protestantism. It is striking that Harding opened up the

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<sup>53</sup> A. Ranson, 'Seperating the Universal Bishop from the Universal Church in the Jewel-Harding Controversy', in: J. Willis (ed.), *Sin and Salvation in Reformation England* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2015), p. 57.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> G. A. Sullivan Jr. & A. Stewart (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of English Renaissance Literature, Vol. I, A – F* (Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), p. 543.

<sup>56</sup> T. Harding, *A confutation of a booke intituled An apologie of the Church of England* (Antwerp, 1565), fol. 14v.

possibility that Antichrist had already come, even if in the text he did not commit to saying definitively that the Antichrist had arrived or who he was.

The caution of Catholics such as Harding in making specific identifications of the Antichrist may explain the comparative lack of historiographical attention to early modern Catholic apocalypticism. A refusal to make explicit identifications has made it appear that apocalyptic understandings of the present were held less strongly by early modern Catholics. Yet restraint in specifically identifying the Antichrist did not preclude early modern Protestants from being associated with apocalyptic belief. For example, in the *Apology* Jewel did not argue in his own authorial voice that the Pope was Antichrist but rather repeated what others had said.<sup>57</sup> This reluctance openly to identify the Antichrist in his own authorial voice distanced him from such an identification, yet his inclusion of other people's identifications of the papal Antichrist did imply that he supported them. Jewel's ability to maintain an apocalyptic worldview yet show resistance to identifying the Antichrist personally is significant because of the historiographical assumption that Jewel had an apocalyptic worldview rooted in the identification of Antichrist. Andrew Escobedo has argued that 'Commentaries such as John Jewel's sermon on Thessalonians (1569) make clear the continued expectation of future judgement'.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Viggo Norskov Olsen has claimed that 'Jewel advocates the apocalyptic idea that the Messiah can be expected to come "out of the blue"'.<sup>59</sup> Jewel did indeed have an apocalyptic world view, but his writings reveal that one could adhere to the belief that one was living in the last days without specifically identifying Antichrist. This undermines the idea that Catholics had less of an apocalyptic worldview because of their reluctance to name the Antichrist and their defensive stance. It also highlights that both Catholics and Protestants were guarded in identifying the eschatological opponent both faiths expected.

In the early to mid-1560s Harding in fact went further than Jewel in making his own arguments about Antichrist. Harding explained why Protestants claimed to be the true gospel

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<sup>57</sup>J. Jewel, *An apologie, or aunswer in defence of the Church of England concerninge the state of religion vsed in the same. Newly set forth in Latin, and nowe translated into Englishe* (London, Reginald Wolf, 1562), G. W. Jenkins, *John Jewel and the English National Church: The Dilemmas of an Erastian Reformer* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006), p. 105.

<sup>58</sup> A. Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss in Renaissance England: Foxe, Dee, Spenser Milton* (London, Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 93.

<sup>59</sup> V. Norskov Olsen, *John Foxe and the Elizabethan Church* (London, University of California Press, 1973), p. 45.

and deceived so many and added an eschatological imperative for people not to believe the Protestant message. Harding directly linked the spread of Protestantism to preparing the way for Antichrist when he described how

at his [Antichrist's] coming... evill shall beare the name of good, and darkenes the name of light, when the greater number shal folowe him, and fewe stand to the true faith of Christ: what better argument can his ministers make to deceive those few that remaine sounde and whole, then saying as ye saye, what doubt ye of our doctrine, seing that nowe almost the whole world foloweth this waye and beginneth to open their eyes to behold the light? <sup>60</sup>

We can see in the two passages that Harding oscillated between the positions that Antichrist may have already come and that he was still to come in the future. Harding made his interpretation of Protestants as the forerunners of Antichrist more explicit when he claimed that 'after the doctrine of your newe Gospell like the forerunners of Antichrist ye have abandoned the externall Sacrifice and priesthood of the newe testament'.<sup>61</sup> What is also significant is the position of Protestantism compared with other heresies in Harding's thought and argument. Harding was concerned with Protestantism and the Antichrist exclusively in these passages. Harding did not present Protestantism in a lineage of heresies in these discussions of Antichrist which may allude to the idea that Protestantism had a special relationship with the eschatological enemy of mankind. The advent of Antichrist was understood to confirm that the Reformation was part of the last confrontation between good and evil foretold in the Apocalypse.<sup>62</sup> Harding shows that Catholics as well as Protestants saw the struggles of the Reformation as the surest sign that the End had begun but were still waiting for the final Antichrist's arrival.

In the same year that Harding's text was printed a work translated by Thomas Stapleton, supposedly written by Fridericus Staphylus, depicted Luther as the representation and spirit of the final Antichrist but not the final Antichrist himself. The text described how

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<sup>60</sup> T. Harding, *A confutation of a booke intituled An apologie of the Church of England* (Antwerp, 1565), fol. 14v – 15r.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 56v.

<sup>62</sup> S. Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 338.

it may serve to the Lutherans of oure countre for a most evident argument of the sprit of Antichrist speaking in Luther, and of a wicked and detestable archeheretike. For what is more convenient for Antichrist, or more proper for an archeheretike, then to corrupt gods holy worde, and geve us in stede of it, his owne poisonnous and hereticall worde?’<sup>63</sup>

Luther, according to this text, may not have been the actual Antichrist but was his mouthpiece, a figure through which the Antichrist conducted the beginning of his assault on mankind. This text thus drew a closer connection between the leading figures of Protestantism and Antichrist than Harding did. This highlights how although Catholic views about the relationship between Protestantism and Antichrist were remarkably similar, there was not one unified opinion. The argument that heresy was ‘convenient for Antichrist’ did indicate a shared view with Harding that heretical teaching, by weakening the unity of the Catholic faith and deceiving members of the Church, created ready followers for the Antichrist and thus Protestants prepared the way for the final foe.

In an attempt to identify the Antichrist early modern Catholics compared the duration of the persecution they suffered at the hands of Protestantism to biblical predictions perceived to describe the reign of Antichrist. In 1566 Thomas Heskyns assessed that

the booke of the Machabees... doo testifie to be don in three years onelie, Wherbie yt ys plain, these three yeares and a half to be spoken of the times of Antichryste, who by the space of ... a thousande two hundreth and ninetie daies, shall persecute the holie and faithfull chryistians, and after shall fall downe in the famouse and holie hill.<sup>64</sup>

After applying these prophecies Heskyns concluded that Antichrist was still to come because Protestant persecution covered a significantly longer time span than that revealed in the Bible.

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<sup>63</sup> F. Staphylus, *The apologie of Fridericus Staphylus counsellor to the late Emperour Ferdinandus, &c. Intreating of the true and right vnderstanding of holy Scripture. Of the translation of the Bible in to the vulgar tongue. Of disagreement in doctrine amonge the protestants. Translated out of Latin in to English by Thomas Stapleton, student in divinite. Also a discourse of the translatour uppon the doctrine of the protestants which he trieth by the three first founders and fathers thereof, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and especially John Calvin* (1565), fol. 6v.

<sup>64</sup> T. Heskyns, *The parliament of Chryste auouching and declaring the enacted and receaued trueth of the presence of his bodie and bloode in the blessed Sacrament, and of other articles concerning the same, impugned in a wicked sermon by M. Juell, collected and seth-furth by Thomas Heskyns Doctour of dyuinitie* (Antwerpe, William Silvius, 1566), fol. lxxx.v.

Protestants were therefore forerunners and deceived by false prophets but the final Antichrist had not yet emerged. It is significant that early modern Catholics such as Heskyns asked these questions about Protestantism and applied Biblical prophecies regarding the Antichrist to the Protestants of their age. Despite Heskyns's conclusion that the figures given in Machabees did not yet fit, it is important that the question was asked as this clearly indicates an apocalyptic worldview and potentially a historicist understanding blurred with a futurist understanding. Stuart Clark has argued that 'since for Catholics the reign of Antichrist was still thought of in literal terms as of brief duration... even the official 'futurist' argument that it had not yet come need not necessarily have dampened apocalyptic enthusiasms'.<sup>65</sup> Heskyns circulated his consideration of prophecy, Antichrist and current affairs in print and in a public argument highlighting that Catholics were not hiding their apocalyptic speculations. The text was directed at both the English Catholic community and Protestants themselves, indeed Heskyns directly challenged John Jewel. Catholics were comparing their own times to Biblical prophecies regarding the apocalypse and Antichrist and even if they concluded that the time-scales did not match, the fact that they asked the questions reveals their apocalyptic expectations.

When answering Protestant challenges that the Pope was Antichrist Catholics declared that Protestants, rather than the Pope, were more like Antichrist. In 1567, a year following Heskyns's work, Stapleton argued with the Bishop of Winchester, Robert Horne, that 'it is not the Pope, but your self M. Horn, that with this your ful unchristian[n] doctrin, a[n]d develish divinity, in soluting M. Fekenhams argument, prepareth a redy way for Antichrist'.<sup>66</sup> Stapleton himself acknowledged this to be a reaction and answer to Horne rather than an independent identification of Protestants preparing 'a redy way for Antichrist'. What this does is appear to limit Stapleton's argument to a tit-for-tat insult and make his identification appear superficial. However, this dialogue and trade in allegations did cause the debate to be conducted in apocalyptic language. Also, in the argument that Protestants prepared 'a redy way for

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<sup>65</sup> S. Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 343.

<sup>66</sup> T. Stapleton, *A counterblast to M. Hornes vayne blaste against M. Fekenham Wherein is set forthe: a ful reply to M. Hornes Answer, and to every part therof made, against the declaration of my L. Abbat of Westminster, M. Fekenham, touching, the Othe of the Supremacy. By perusing vwhereof shall appeare, besides the holy Scriptures, as it were a chronicle of the continual practise of Christes Church in al ages and countries, fro[m] the time of Constantin the Great, until our daies: proving the popes and bishops supremacy in ecclesiastical causes: and disproving the princes supremacy in the same causes.* By Thomas Stapleton student in divinitie. (Louvain, 1567), fol. 408v.



Antichrist' Stapleton in effect claimed that Protestants had prepared the way for the End of the World. As Harding had done two years previously, Stapleton continued the claim that Protestants were Antichrist's forerunners and messengers. He prayed to God to 'open the eyes of our Countrie, to see who is in dede the true Antichrist, and who are his messengers and forerunners, thereby carefully and Christianly to shun as well the one as the other'.<sup>67</sup> It is interesting that Stapleton focused on England and on answering Horne's challenges rather than on Protestantism as a whole. Stapleton proposed that 'Christ is the Truth it selfe, as him selfe hath said. Who then is more nere Antichriste, then the teacher of Untruthes? And what a huge number hath M. Horne heaped us uppe'.<sup>68</sup> Protestants were 'more nere Antichriste' and his messengers but Stapleton created a conspicuous distance between Protestants and Antichrist and would not declare Antichrist's arrival.

This could be because Stapleton desired to reconvert England, as expressed in his plea for God to 'open the eyes of our Countrie'. Although he wanted to issue a stark warning of the danger of Protestantism he still needed to offer the possibility of return and redemption. Stapleton was also convinced that bringing England back to the Catholic faith was achievable by man, a possibility that the arrival of Antichrist, by his nature, would remove. As Richard Marius has argued, Stapleton wrote 'voluminously against the Protestants under the common assumption of the time that polemical pages were like soldiers and that the side that produced the greater number would win the war'.<sup>69</sup> The distance Stapleton created between Antichrist and Protestants could therefore be an expression of hope that his and other Catholic works would have an effect on his countrymen's religious outlook. It could also be a manifestation of Stapleton's religious leanings and theology. As Matthew McLean has assessed, Stapleton took an Augustinian view of biblical interpretation and was writing during the 'development of a distinct Augustinian exegesis of the Bible in Louvain'.<sup>70</sup> In support of this Wim François has argued that the renewed interest in Augustine 'which thoroughly influenced the interpretation of the Scriptures by Luther, Calvin and other reformers, also led the Louvain theologians to a

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<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 190r.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, fols. 190r – 190v.

<sup>69</sup> R. Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (New York, Harvard University Press, 1999), p. xvii.

<sup>70</sup> B. Gordon & M. McLean (eds.), *Shaping the Bible in the Reformation: Books, Scholars and Their Readers in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden, Brill, 2012), p. 12.

specific focus on the Church father'.<sup>71</sup> However, Stapleton's understanding was more complex, and 'To a large degree, Stapleton's theology was a return to the eclectic Augustinian-Thomistic spirit'.<sup>72</sup> These theological influences are significant when attempting to understand Stapleton's worldview because both Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, while certain that the End was coming, were reluctant to provide a time-frame or a date. Thus the influence of these two theologians on Stapleton's own understanding of the biblical predictions may explain why Stapleton was cautious about identifying the Antichrist or labelling Protestants as his forces rather than his forerunners. Nevertheless, the texts still show an eschatological understanding of the world and Protestantism's place in it.

The fact that there were many leading figures in Protestantism enabled Catholics to point to the variety of Protestant beliefs as proof that Protestantism was a manifestation of Antichrist. A text by Jean d'Albin de Valsergues translated into English in 1575 argued that the heretical leaders including Hus, Luther and the 'Archehretike Calvine with the rest of that rable did never agree one with another'.<sup>73</sup> This meant that 'in their doinges there is no unitie, no certaintie at all... this division, this unconstancie of doctrine was a manifest toke[n], that they were... the children of the devill, and ministers of Antichriste, yea, very Antichristes'.<sup>74</sup> This translation of Jean d'Albin de Valsergus's work was printed by William Carter on his clandestine Catholic press in London. It is interesting to note that a text which describes Protestantism in its various forms as 'ministers of Antichriste, yea, very Antichristes' was the first to come from this press. The text continued that

These Antichristes have borne a great stroke nowe too longe time in our Realm of England... These are they that have damnably deceived you, & have with their damnable preachinges intised you from Church to Church, from an heavenly Church, to a malignant Church: from a

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<sup>71</sup> W. Francois, 'Augustine and the Golden Age of Biblical Scholarship in Louvain (1550 – 1650)', in: B. Gordon & M. Mclean (eds.), *Shaping the Bible in the Reformation: Books, Scholars and Their Readers in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden, Brill, 2012), p. 237.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>73</sup> J. d'Albin de Valsergues, *A notable discourse, plainelye and truely discussing, who are the right ministers of the Catholike Church written against Calvin and his disciples, ... with an offer made by a Catholike to be a learned Protestant* (1575), sig. PP7.r.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

loving mother, to a flattering harlot: from the condition of grace, to the state of perdition.<sup>75</sup>

We may presume the text reflects the translator(s)'s views as the statement 'in our Realm of England' shows the text has been edited rather than straightforwardly translated. The argument that Protestantism had prospered for 'too longe [a] time' could be a call to action and may imply the idea that Protestantism would decline and had a fixed temporal existence. The notion that something has been here too long suggests that it had outstayed a limited duration. This is telling of Catholic perceptions of Protestantism in 1575 and may reveal that some Catholics believed Protestantism could be defeated by human action. This may reflect the context created by the Bull of Excommunication against Elizabeth five years prior which suggested that man, and the Pope in particular, needed to act as agents of the divine will. Being 'Antichristes' entailed that they would fail, as all scriptural prophecies reassure the faithful that Christ will triumph in the End.

It appears that Augustinian reticence regarding naming the Antichrist left a long legacy in the English Catholic community. Writing in 1580 in response to the Protestant divine William Fulke, Richard Bristow refused to say 'that Antichrist agreeth to Luther, or Calvin, or any other of you' and claimed that 'He shall be another maner of felow'.<sup>76</sup> Unlike Protestantism, in which Church leaders such as Calvin and Luther argued that the Pope was Antichrist, early modern Catholics had no clear unified statement of belief on this issue. The Pope had not declared either Luther, Calvin or other Protestants to be Antichrist. This resulted in a variety of positions being adopted and Bristow's suggestion that 'He shall be another maner of felow' could be a reference to the large body of work done by theologians in the Middle Ages about the character of Antichrist. To an extent Protestants had disregarded much of the inherited belief about Antichrist when Luther, Calvin and others adopted the position that the Pope, or succession of popes, were Antichrist. Protestant identifications of Antichrist may have appeared more certain because they were using a new and arguably simplified conception of the enemy of mankind. For Protestants the Antichrist was the Pope or institution of the papacy. Catholics on the other hand had to balance and consider centuries of Antichrist belief in which

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> R. Bristow, *A reply to Fulke, In defense of M. D. Allens scroll of articles, and booke of purgatorie. By Richard Bristow Doctor of Diuinitie ... perused and allowed by me Th. Stapleton* (Louvain [East Ham], John Lion [Greenstreet House Press, 1580), fol. 129r .

the notion of Antichrist and who he would be and what characteristics he would exhibit had been built up and expanded upon. This made the figure of Antichrist more complex and thus Catholic identifications appear more uncertain.

Although Catholic Antichrist belief had developed overtime this did not necessarily lead to much conflicting opinion and there was a discernible continuity. For example Bristow and Heskyns shared an eschatological understanding of persecution and the Antichrist. As Heskyns had done 14 years earlier, Bristow looked to the prophecies of Daniel to comprehend his own time. Bristow argued that

Yea in the time that is to come, when your great lord Antichrist shal appeare in person, even then also the Church shal stand stil in the sight of the world, as it did in al the former persecution[n]s in the first 300. yeres. For there shal be *preaching* al y<sup>e</sup> time of the persecution, even 1260. *days*, as the persecution shal last 42. *moneths*, which both co[m]meth to *three yeres & a halfe*, & the preaching shal be as general as the persecution.<sup>77</sup>

The connection between Protestants and the Antichrist was reinforced in the notion that ‘Antichrist ‘shal appeare in person’ which implied that Antichrist was present in spirit and undermined the Protestant claim that the Antichrist could be an institution. Bristow drew a connection between Protestants and the Antichrist in the statement that ‘your great lord Antichrist shal appeare’ but concluded that he was still to come. This once again shows a literal understanding of the biblical prophecies and an apocalyptic expectation which cannot be classed as wholly futurist. Antichrist was still to come but there was no suggestion that this was to be in the distant future rather than in the near future.

The connection between Protestants and Antichrist was given the authority of the Church as it was taught next to sacred writ. The marginal note to the annotations of the 1582 Douai-Rheims translation of the ‘First Epistle of John’ on which Bristow worked argued ‘Al

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<sup>77</sup> R. Bristow, *A reply to Fulke, In defense of M. D. Allens scroll of articles, and booke of purgatorie. By Richard Bristo Doctor of Divinitie ... perused and allowed by me Th. Stapleton* (1580), fol. 123r.

Heretikes are antichrist the foreru[n]ners of the great Antichrist'.<sup>78</sup> This is an example of a typological understanding of Scripture which was a result of a centuries' long discussion of how there could be one Antichrist but also many antichrists. The epistles of John were vital for biblical commentators exploring the topic of Antichrist because it is only in this text that the term Antichrist is used in the Bible. In the first and second epistles of John the term is then used four times singularly – 'Antichrist' – and once indicating the plural – 'Antichrists'. It was not considered a contradiction to believe that antichrists had already come and were present in the church, and that Antichrist was still to come and threaten the church externally. The many antichrists were those that foreshadowed the final Antichrist and partook of his nature, just as it was believed Old Testament messiah-like figures prefigured Christ and predicted his coming. In the same way as figures in the Old Testament expressed an aspect of the coming Messiah, so too did each individual antichrist reveal a feature of the final Antichrist to come.

The First Epistle of John was an important text for Catholics following the Reformation and those wishing to understand Antichrist while the Reformation itself had impacted upon the 1582 translation of 1 John and the Catholic understanding of Antichrist. The marginal note alongside a passage concerning 'Antichrists' taught readers that 'The marke of al heretikes is, their going out of the Catholike societie'.<sup>79</sup> The annotations of the Douai-Rheims translation of the text reinforced the dangers of heresy and its links to the End as it explained that 'al Heretickes, or rather Arch-heretickes be properly the precursors of that one and special Antichrist, which is to come at the last end of the world'.<sup>80</sup> Protestantism thus portended the coming of Antichrist and this interpretation gained authority from being printed within the Bible. Works of controversy drew their authority from the Church Fathers, Biblical quotes and the reputation of the author whereas Biblical marginalia drew their authority directly from the Church and to some extent from Scripture as they were in such close proximity and contained alongside sacred writ. William Slights has argued that English writers of the early modern period presented their 'marginal commentary either as the key to which secured texts may easily be unlocked or as the perfectly transparent... window through which readers can gain

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<sup>78</sup> First Epistle of John, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 679.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

an undistorted view of the contents of the text'.<sup>81</sup> The Douai-Rheims New Testament was encased within polemical marginalia which entrenched the idea that Catholic interpretation of the Word was the only viable interpretation. Slight's reminds us that 'just as there are no politically innocent texts, so too are there no politically neutral marginalia'.<sup>82</sup> Addressing arguments over heretics in the margins of the Bible also had another effect, as Katrin Ettenhuber has claimed, of 'turning the margin into a tool of marginalization, and other faiths into 'heretiks' and 'usurpers' of the promised scriptural land'.<sup>83</sup> It made the visual argument that heretics and heretical interpretation were at the margins of Scripture, spatially threatening but not penetrating the text. Bristow's annotations, located at the end of Biblical chapters, provided a polemical gloss on sacred writ and underscored teaching and correct interpretation. It imbued the arguments with the full authority of the Catholic Church and scripture itself due to the annotations' location. Significantly, the text of 1 John 2:18 declared that 'it is the last houre, & as you have heard, that Antichrist commeth: now there are become "many antichrists": whereby we know that it is the last houre'.<sup>84</sup> The appearance of many antichrists was given the same significance as a sign of the End as the appearance of the individual final Antichrist. Early modern Catholics continued the typological tradition of the existence of many antichrists and a final great Antichrist, yet that did not mean that they interpreted 'forerunners of Antichrist' as being sequential but rather that they revealed yet another feature of the final individual foe.

The view that heretics were Antichrist's precursors suggests that the Protestant heresy could be defeated by man. This may have encouraged agency rather than passively awaiting God's Judgement. Catholics could take comfort from history, and in particular the Roman persecution, to prove that the Church for over a thousand years had survived the onslaught of heretical sects and paganism. Catholics would be inspired to repent of their sins while heretics could be encouraged to return to the 'true' faith. This challenges Richard Emmerson's argument that Protestants in general allowed a greater role for human action in defeating

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<sup>81</sup> W. W. E. Slight, *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2004), p. 105.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>83</sup> K. Killen, H. Smith & R. Willie, *The Oxford Handbook of The Bible in Early Modern England, 1530 – 1700* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 58.

<sup>84</sup> First Epistle John, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 678

Antichrist in comparison to Catholics.<sup>85</sup> Both faiths encouraged human agency against the perceived workers of iniquity. To encourage people to challenge and overcome the many antichrists may be one reason why Luther and Calvin were not proclaimed by Catholics as the final Antichrist.

The special danger attributed to Protestants, and Calvin and Luther in particular, was derived from the speed at which Protestantism spread and the numbers it had attracted. The annotations to chapter XXI of the Apocalypse made the clerical view clear that ‘the sects of Luther, Calvin and other, be more spread through the world then they were ever before, and consequently the Pope and his religion lessened, and his power to punish diminished’.<sup>86</sup> Readers were asked, ‘How then is the Pope Antichrist, whose force shall be greater at the later end of the world, then before?’<sup>87</sup> While clearing the Pope of the charge of Antichrist the annotator then proceeded to argue that ‘these sect. Maisters should be Antichrists neere percursors... that come so neere the time of the Divels loosing and seduction & of the personal reigne of Antichrist?’<sup>88</sup> The annotations directly placed the events of his own time in the Apocalyptic time-line. Although Robin Bruce Barnes has argued that ‘Lutheranism was the only major confession of the Reformation era to give a clear, virtually doctrinal sanction to a powerful sense of eschatological expectation’, these annotations suggest that the Catholic Church also supported and encouraged a ‘sense of eschatological expectation’.<sup>89</sup>

The annotations to chapter XIII of the Douai-Rheims Apocalypse returned to the question about Antichrist’s identity and argued that ‘truly whatsoever the Protestants presume herein of the Pope, we may boldly discharge Luther of that dignitie’.<sup>90</sup> Catholic works were focused on refutation and establishing that the Pope could not be Antichrist but did not propose another figure as a more suitable candidate. One reason for this can be found in the Douai-Rheims annotations which cautioned readers that

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<sup>85</sup> R. K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Washington, University of Washington Press, 1982), p. 219.

<sup>86</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 741.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> R. B. Barnes, *Prophecy and Gnosis: Apocalypticism in the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 2.

<sup>90</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 724.

Though God would not have it manifest before hand to the world, who in particular this Antichrist should be: yet it pleased him to give such tokens of him, that when he commeth, the faithful may easily take notice of him, according as it is written of the event other prophecies concerning our Saviour, *That when it is come to passe, you may believe*. In the meane time we must take heed that we judge not over rashly of Gods secrets.<sup>91</sup>

For Catholics such as Bristow the identity of Antichrist was not to be disclosed until he came. This is revealing as it indicates that the official Catholic view was that Antichrist was still to come. This would be a significant difference between early modern Catholic and Protestant perceptions of their own age. It may be because Protestants interpreted the emergence of their religion as the ushering in of a new era. They had identified the Antichrist in the papacy and broken away, and believed that they were making the invisible church visible. In contrast, Catholics had a concept of endurance until the End. As a faith they had previously endured and triumphed when challenged by heretical teaching. They had over one thousand five hundred years of history from which to draw solace and their understanding of the Bible predicted that heresies would arise and wax and wane. The defensive position of early modern Catholics and the notion that their Church would survive the Protestant onslaught as it had survived other heresies supports Bernard McGinn's argument that 'Despite the thousands of pages written about Antichrist by Catholic polemicists between about 1520 and 1660 C.E., the century and a half of the most savage stages of Catholic-Protestant debate, one gets the sense that only a rearguard action was being fought'.<sup>92</sup> Although McGinn's understanding is correct to an extent there was a strain of Catholic thought which was formulating its own predictions about the arrival of Antichrist and the connection to Protestantism. In this sense it was not entirely a rearguard action but Catholic ideas were often expressed alongside the response to Protestantism.

Luther and Calvin were given a special apocalyptic role as representing the star that fell from heaven in Apocalypse chapter IX. Bristow claimed in a reply to William Fulke that

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<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p. 723.

<sup>92</sup> B. McGinn, *Antichrist: Two Thousand Years of Human Fascination with Evil* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 230.



[Protestantism] is of marveilous *Locustes* by a certayne *falling starre* let out of hell... Their power is not *to kill* the faithful, but *to torment them fiue monethes*... Now the time of their persecution commeth to short of yours: Also the universalitie... the vehemencie thereof over reacheth yours, though yours will be as good as theirs, as by Elmers Rackes some Catholikes have had experience. But otherwise manifold & passing similitude betwene you & them, in the smoke, in the horses, in the whole Anatomie of the Locustes, and above all, in the like destroying and sacrilegious wast of Gods Churches and their sacred vessell and holy ornamentes.<sup>93</sup>

Two years later in the marginal notes to the Douai-Rheims translation of Apocalypse chapter IX, which Bristow assisted in preparing, he no longer claimed that Protestants were similar to the locusts but implied that they were the apocalyptic locusts. The Apocalypse prophesied that ‘the fifth Angel sounded with the trompet, & I saw a starre to have falle[n] from heaven upon the earth, & there was given to him the key of the pitte of bottomless depth’, while the accompanying marginal note claimed that this event was ‘The fal of an Arch hereticke, as Arius, Luther, Calvin out of the Church of God. W[h]ich have the key of Hel to open & bring forth al the old condemned heresies buried before in the depth.’<sup>94</sup> If Arius, Luther and Calvin were the apocalyptic star then that would mean that Protestants were the apocalyptic locusts which the star was prophesised to release. It appears that between 1580 and 1582 Bristow had moved from a position in which he viewed Protestants as only similar to the locusts of the Apocalypse, because Protestantism had persecuted longer but less universally and with less vehemence, to a position where Calvin and Luther were indeed the star that fell from heaven to release the locusts which were Protestantism. This would point to the year 1581 being an important watershed for Catholic perceptions and would stress the magnitude of the impact the execution of Edmund Campion had on Catholic apocalypticism. When Bristow wrote in 1580 that ‘the vehemencie’ of the apocalyptic locusts’ persecution ‘over reacheth yours’ the 1581 ‘Act to retain the Queen's Majesty's subjects in their obedience’ had not yet been passed and Campion, alongside two other priests, had not been hung, drawn and quartered.<sup>95</sup> The 1581

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<sup>93</sup> R. Bristow, *A reply to Fulke, In defense of M. D. Allens scroll of articles, and booke of purgatorie. By Richard Bristo Doctor of Diuinitie ... perused and allowed by me Th. Stapleton* (Lovaine [East Ham], John Lion [Greenstreet House Press]. 1580), p. 130.

<sup>94</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 715.

<sup>95</sup> 23 Eliz. c. 1.

penal legislation made it high treason to be reconciled or to reconcile anyone to Catholicism, and imprisonment for the hearing of mass. This extended the possibility of persecution further to ordinary Catholics and essentially made being a Catholic priest punishable by a gruesome public execution. The influence of this tougher legislation on the mentality of Catholic priests, was reflected in the hardening of their apocalyptic world-views.

This may also reflect a growing feeling of apprehension amongst the Catholic community because even if the legislation was not vigorously enforced it opened up new possibilities of persecution and challenged current compromise. As Alex Walsham has suggested rhetoric ‘functioned as a sort of safety valve that contained the tensions created by the pragmatic compromises that prevailed at the grassroots. The “scourge”, “smiting” and “persecution of the tongue” compensated for the *modus vivendi* that marked daily interactions between the members of rival faiths’ and this ‘eased the theological and ethical discomfort of living alongside the enemies of God’.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, Anthony Milton has claimed that no matter what the reality of the situation in early modern England for Catholic integration ‘Catholics did not necessarily see themselves as being integrated’.<sup>97</sup> The perception, rather than the practical effects, of Protestant rule may have given clarity to apocalyptic identification and made Catholics stauncher in their resistance. Catholics were no longer disobeying the state but were defying the persecuting locusts of the Apocalypse. Thus, the identification of Antichrist and the language used was historically contingent.

### **Outlawing of the Mass**

Early modern Catholics believed that the Protestant proscription of the Mass was a clear indicator that they were Antichrists. Catholics were quick to point out in regards to the mass the inconsistencies of Protestant claims to base their faith on the literal interpretation of the Bible and *sola Scriptura*. Fridericus Staphylus’s apology printed in 1565 argued that by denying the real presence Luther and Calvin asked people to yield to their ‘arrogancy’ against the express word of God, which in turn made Luther ‘showe him selfe to be a

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<sup>96</sup> A. Walsham, ‘Cultures of Coexistence in Early Modern England: History, Literature and Religious Toleration’, *The Seventeenth Century*, vol. 28, no.2 (2013), p. 125.

<sup>97</sup> A. Milton, ‘Religion and community in pre-civil war England’, in: N. Tyacke (ed.), *The English Revolution c. 1590 – 1720: Politics, Religion and Communities* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 66.

very *Antichriste*'.<sup>98</sup> Staphylus questioned 'dothe not Calvin require the very same?' and answered that 'where as the Lutheran allegeth that bicause the wordes of Christ are plaine saieng. *This is my body*, he can not be brought to make it a figure, as Calvin dothe'.<sup>99</sup> Catholics such as Staphylus believed that Protestants placed their human reason above the words of God and argued that Calvin was claiming 'Though Christ speake plainly... you must harken [to]... what we can saie against it: and ye must geve eare to suche reasons, as we can laie against him: and then folowe my reason[n], what soever Christe or the ghospel telleth you'.<sup>100</sup> Staphylus concluded that 'we most truly say of our time. *there are many Antichristes*: but none a more righter Antichrist, the[n] this heretike Calvi[n]' while the marginal note made clear his thoughts that 'Calvin is an Antichrist'.<sup>101</sup> Catholics and Protestants both claimed the other had corrupted the true faith, something contemporary Catholics had detected.

For some early modern Catholics the prohibition of the mass was the clearest indicator that the world had entered the Last Times. In 1566 Thomas Heskyns claimed regarding the bread in the mass that 'this sacrifice ys appointed to be perpetuall, and to co[n]tinewe untill Chrystes co[m]minge'.<sup>102</sup> This may suggest that Heskyns viewed the Second Coming as imminent because of the attack on the idea of the real presence contained in article 28 of the Thirty Nine Articles published in 1563 and the establishment of the Church of England. Catholics such as Heskyns may have interpreted the removal of the public practice of the Catholic mass by the Protestant regime as evidence that they were living in the End Times. Heskyns used other Biblical prophecies to understand his own time and reported that 'Daniell ... speaking of the wickednesse of the time of Antichriste, amonge other evells that then shall be wrought, he saied that the dailie sacrifice shall be taken awaie'.<sup>103</sup> Placed in its contemporary setting this text made the argument that the Protestant regime in England was Antichristian and

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<sup>98</sup> F. Staphylus, *The apologie of Fridericus Staphylus counseller to the late Emperour Ferdinandus, &c. Intreating of the true and right vnderstanding of holy Scripture. Of the translation of the Bible in to the vulgar tongue. Of disagreement in doctrine amonge the protestants. Translated out of Latin in to English by Thomas Stapleton, student in divinite. Also a discourse of the translatour uppon the doctrine of the protestants which he trieth by the three first founders and fathers thereof, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and especially John Calvin* (Antwerp, 1565), fol. 242.r

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> T. Heskyns, *The parliament of Chryste auouching and declaring the enacted and receaued trueth of the presence of his bodie and bloode in the blessed Sacrament, and of other articles concerning the same, impugned in a wicked sermon by M. Iuell, collected and seth-furth by Thomas Heskyns Doctour of dyuinitie* (Antwerpe, William Silvius, 1566), sig. Piiiij.v.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*

that the world had entered the final apocalyptic drama. Those who attended Protestant services were thus members of the False Church and followers of Antichrist while the Catholic mass was the only means of salvation. Heskyns pointed to the prophecy in ‘the booke of the Machabees’ and interpreted its meaning to be that ‘Antichryste, shall ...forbidde the service of God, unto his destruction[n]’.<sup>104</sup> Heskyns added ‘the exposition of [the] prophecie of *Daniel* that in the time of Antichrist the service of God shall be by him forbodden’.<sup>105</sup> For Heskyns Scripture had warned of the Protestant changes in England and Europe and provided a key to decoding the present. The Bible offered hope as prohibiting the mass had ensured Antichrist’s destruction and proved his identity. That Heskyns’s work, with its reference to how the service of God would be disallowed by Antichrist for three and a half years, was published in 1566, at least three years after the publication of the Thirty Nine Articles, could indicate that he believed Protestantism would soon fall in England. However, the survival of Catholicism and Catholic practice between 1563 and 1581 meant that during that time Catholics needed to reassess their opinion of the regime and their identification of it as the Antichrist. The prophecy of three and a half years would no longer fit. Legislation may have been severe but practice and enforcement were not rigorous enough to create a clear identification of Antichrist.

Catholics perceived the Protestant attack on transubstantiation and the prohibition of the mass as evidence that Protestants were the false prophets of Antichrist. Nicholas Sanders argued that

*to thinck that Luther and Calvin have power to alter and abrogate this  
publicke sacrifice (called now the Masse) is to thinck that Luther and  
Calvin are the same toward Christe, Which Christ was toward Moyses:  
For that is it which Christ meaneth saying False Prophets and False  
Christians shal arise.*<sup>106</sup>

Alongside this main body of text Sanders referred his readers to Matthew 24 in the margin, a passage which related Christ’s prophecy of the destruction of the temple and the signs of the End Times. This idea of false prophets supports Stuart Clark’s contention that inversion was

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid.* fol. lxxx.v.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> N. Sanders, *The Rocke of the Church: Wherein the Primacy of S. Peter and his Successours the Bishops of Rome is proved out of Gods Worde* (Lovain, 1567), sig. \*\*\*\*iijv.

the ‘basic iconography of apocalyptic events’.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, according to the Apocalypse the false prophet would perform signs to enable the beast – often interpreted as Antichrist – to deceive mankind. The destruction of the false prophet was predicted in Apocalypse 19:20 and thus the false prophet’s arrival would be a clear signal of the End and Antichrist’s imminence, and subsequently an individual’s apocalyptic worldview. The Protestant rejection of the real presence was thought to show that they were antichrists because it went against the direct words of Christ, based on the fact that the passages in the Bible reporting the Last Supper claim Christ gave the bread to the disciples and said ‘this is my body’.

In contrast with Heskins and Sanders, Thomas Stapleton professed the view that because the mass was still being performed in secret it showed that Protestants were antichristian but that the time of Antichrist had not begun. Stapleton argued that

contrary to your Antichristian blasphemy againste the sacrifice of the masse... The sacrificing priesthod M. Horn for al your spite shal co[n]tinewe, and shal not uttterly fayle until the time of Anticrist. The[n] shal it fayl in dede for three years a[n]d a half, according to the prophecy of Daniel, a[n]d the sayings of the fathers, namely of S. Augustin, Prosper, Primasius, S. Hiero[m], and S. Gregory.<sup>108</sup>

The concern of Catholics with duration and their tendency to apply biblical prophecies to contemporary events reveals a historicist apocalypticism and shows a literal interpretation of eschatological prophecies. It is interesting that Stapleton had assessed the contemporary situation and decided that it was not as bad as the eschatological prophecies predicted. Stapleton’s view compared with that of other authors suggests that the Catholic identification of Antichrist was not crystallized because the situation on the ground was not as stark as the impression given by apocalyptic texts.

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<sup>107</sup> S. Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 349.

<sup>108</sup> T. Stapleton, *A counterblast to M. Hornes vayne blaste against M. Fekenham Wherein is set forthe: a ful reply to M. Hornes Answer, and to euery part therof made, against the declaration of my L. Abbat of Westminster, M. Fekenham, touching, the Othe of the Supremacy. By perusing vwhereof shall appeare, besides the holy Scriptures, as it vvere a chronicle of the continual practise of Christes Churche in al ages and countries, fro[m] the time of Constantin the Great, until our daies: proving the popes and bishops supremacy in ecclesiastical causes: and disprouing the princes supremacy in the same causes.* By Thomas Stapleton student in diuinitie. (Louvain, 1567), fol. 408v.

As Elizabeth's reign continued it became increasingly difficult for Catholics to avoid attending Protestant services and to celebrate the mass. This resulted in the view that Protestantism was connected to and prepared the way for Antichrist becoming firmer and being spread more widely. By 1580 some recusants were being taught that they should answer the statute for not attending the Church of England by explaining that the time for Antichrist loomed. An anonymous advertisement addressed to Francis Walsingham instructed recusants to tell Protestant authorities that

the time aprocheth for Antichrist... the waie beinge so redelie prepared for his enterance and entertainment. Suche are the sequels of making a newe forme of prayer and abolishing of the Catholike service suporting the Utter overthrowe of all Christian faith and religion and preparation for antichrist his comminge, whose tyrannie Jesus Christ o[u]r only saviour turne and avert from us.<sup>109</sup>

The author of the advertisement perceived the abolishing of Catholic worship as the start of the process of the End. The consequence of Protestantism was believed to be Antichrist's coming and tyranny. The source is more interesting because of who it was addressed to. Francis Walsingham was a zealous anti-Catholic and responsible for the discovery of many of the Catholic plots in Elizabeth's reign. That this was being sent to Walsingham could mean that Walsingham was aware of the apocalyptic strain of Catholic thought and disobedience and particularly concerned by it. Or it could mean that this explicit apocalypticism was different and something which needed to be brought to Walsingham's attention. Either way, by 1580 the abolition of the mass and the increasing difficulty Catholics faced in practicing their faith in England meant that the supposed connection between Protestantism and the Antichrist was being used to justify disobedience to the state.

## **Conclusion**

Both early modern English Catholics and Protestants were concerned with the identity of Antichrist. This concern reflected an apocalyptic worldview because, following the Church

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<sup>109</sup> Kew, National Archive, SP 12/136, 15 January 1580, fol. 37v (A brief advertisement to the recusants how to answer to the statute for not coming to the church, addressed to Sir Fr. Walsyngham).

Fathers and theologians of the Middle Ages, the emergence of Antichrist was the strongest indicator that the world was experiencing the events of the End. Early modern Catholics inherited an extensive and complicated theological and popular tradition which may have made them more cautious in identifying the final Antichrist. In comparison, Protestants had broken with biblical, theological and popular belief to identify the succession of popes as the Antichrist thus making identification more certain. Early modern English Catholics were disputing Protestant identifications of Antichrist in a context where the identification of Antichrist had moved from the religious realm to the political arena. This changing context placed the identification of Antichrist at the centre of Reformation debates and policies of political inclusion or exclusion and required Catholics to engage with the argument that the popes of Rome were Antichrist. Hence, the identification of Antichrist became a central Reformation debate between Protestants and Catholics.

Nevertheless, learned Catholics did not identify either Luther, Calvin or Protestants as the Antichrist, but rather the forerunners of Antichrist. This failure to identify Protestants and Protestant leaders as the Antichrist does not suggest that they did not have an apocalyptic worldview. Indeed, Catholics compared the duration of the persecution they suffered at the hands of Protestantism with biblical predictions perceived to describe the reign of Antichrist and prophecies regarding the Apocalypse. The fact that they asked these questions shows apocalyptic expectation. Caution in identifying leading Protestants as Antichrist may be because many of these Catholic texts had the aim at converting Protestants and if one was a member of the Antichrist's forces one's fate would have been sealed. Catholic reluctance to identify a specific Antichrist should not undermine the fact that they held an apocalyptic worldview or apocalyptic perception of the Reformation. Strikingly, Luther and Calvin were given a special apocalyptic role as representing the star that fell from heaven in Apocalypse chapter IX. This apocalyptic role altered over time and it appears that between 1580 and 1582 Catholic apocalyptic worldviews had hardened.

The Protestant attack on transubstantiation and the outlawing of the mass was something Catholics perceived as evidence that Protestants were the false prophets of Antichrist. Catholics used the Protestant rejection of transubstantiation to critique Protestant claims regarding *sola Scriptura* and instead cast them as the apocalyptic deceivers. The legislation against the mass was, for some early modern Catholics, the clearest indicator that

the world had entered the Last Times. However, although legislation may have been severe, the enforcement was not rigorous enough to create a clear identification of Antichrist.

The notion that the Protestant Church was the False Church which this thesis considered in the preceding chapter naturally led people to speculate over the identity of Antichrist. This speculation and Protestant accusations meant that Reformation debates were set in an apocalyptic framework. With the notion that Catholics were experiencing the events of the End and could therefore expect the emergence of the Antichrist, Catholics began to question the identity of other apocalyptic figures. The next chapter shall consider how Elizabeth's gender and Protestant persecution in England combined to cast her, in the eyes of some Catholics, as the apocalyptic Whore of Babylon.



#### **4: Elizabeth I as Jezebel**

In parallel with the Catholic understanding of the Reformation as an eschatological event and with speculation about the identity of Antichrist, Elizabeth's status as a powerful Protestant queen caused her opponents to question whether she was the apocalyptic Whore. Identifications of Elizabeth I as Jezebel or the Whore of Babylon called for action. The Bull of Excommunication in 1570 gave papal authority to criticisms of Elizabeth while the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587 fundamentally changed the political landscape. Previous historiography has tended to argue that English Catholics were in general loyal to Elizabeth and that it was unofficial groups of plotters which were concerned with her deposition and assassination.<sup>1</sup> This has served to exonerate the Catholic clergy and ordinary Catholics of involvement, despite three Popes excommunicating Elizabeth. The idea that Elizabeth was considered the apocalyptic Whore challenges James Holleran's claim that 'In the main... seminary priests were not politically motivated... They recognised Elizabeth as the rightful queen, but they spoke privately against her supreme authority in religious matters'.<sup>2</sup> An eschatological identification of Elizabeth is also contrary to Rafael E. Tarrago's analysis of the relationship between Elizabeth and Catholics.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will work with Peter Holmes' assessment that the 'confessional practice of the Elizabethan priests must... be seen in the wider context of the policy of the Elizabethan Catholic leaders' whose aim was the reconversion of England.<sup>4</sup> Although the early modern Catholic laity was loyal to a large extent, eschatology was politicised amongst the leaders of the Catholic faith and called for swift action from 1570 onwards. As Peter Lake and Michael Questier have argued, 'Catholicism subsequently turned into perhaps the principal ideological expression of resistance to the authority of the Elizabethan regime', and thus Elizabeth herself.<sup>5</sup> This chapter will build on recent research undertaken by Lake into Catholic counter-narratives

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<sup>1</sup> J. V. Holleran (ed.) and Edmund Campion, *A Jesuit Challenge: Edmund Campion's Debates at the Tower of London in 1581* (New York, Fordham University Press, 1999), p. 13, A. Dures, *English Catholicism 1558-1642, Seminar Studies in History* (Harlow, Longman, 1983), p. 6, C. Haigh, 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', *Past & Present*, No. 93 (Nov., 1981), p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> J. V. Holleran (ed.) and Edmund Campion, *A Jesuit Challenge: Edmund Campion's Debates at the Tower of London in 1581* (New York, Fordham University Press, 1999), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> R. E. Tarrago, 'Bloody Bess: The Persecution of Catholics in Elizabethan England', *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Winter, 2004), pp. 117 – 133.

<sup>4</sup> P. Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982) p. 108.

<sup>5</sup> P. Lake & M. Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England* (London, Continuum, 2011), p. 13.

of the Elizabethan regime. It adopts the similar principle that looking at the Elizabethan state from ‘the perspective of the persons’ it attempted to ‘silence and exclude’ can help us understand how Elizabethan politics and public politics worked and build a more comprehensive understanding of the Elizabethan worldview.<sup>6</sup> That Elizabeth was sometimes portrayed as Jezebel, the Whore of the Apocalypse, provides a counter balance to the Protestant portrayal of Elizabeth as a new Esther, English Deborah, new Judith or the Woman Clothed in the Sun.<sup>7</sup> This chapter will ask, if Elizabeth was considered the Whore of Babylon by Catholic leaders, how far did this idea penetrate England? How much of an impact did this identification have on Catholic worldviews and political action? This chapter will consider the importance of allegations that someone had termed the Queen Jezebel before analysing the Bull of Excommunication and its impact. It will then discuss the importance of Mary Queen of Scots and the dialogue surrounding Elizabeth’s treatment of her firstly pre-execution and then post-execution, before considering William Allen’s response to Mary’s execution.

### **Accusations**

An allegation was made in 1561 that in the Spanish territories Elizabeth was commonly preached to be the Antichrist. A letter sent on August 16 by Thomas Nicholls, a merchant in the Canary Islands, to the diplomat Sir William Chamberlain pleaded intervention in his own case and the case of Edward Kingsmill, both of whom were taken by the Spanish Inquisition and questioned for almost two years about their religious beliefs. Nicholls reported that during Kingsmill’s incarceration the inquisitors alleged that Elizabeth ‘was an enemy to the faith, that she was preached to be Antichrist and that she maintained circumcision and the Jewish laws, that also a friar shook off the dust of his shoes against her and the city of London’.<sup>8</sup> The accusations that Nicholls made need to be understood in the context of a civic feud and a long imprisonment. In the course of a trade dispute in 1559, in which Nicholls was representing Kingsmill, Nicholls managed to offend a local notary, Juan Moreno, and frustrate the marriage

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<sup>6</sup> P. Lake, *Bad Queen Bess?: Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> M. Ephraim, *Reading the Jewish Woman on the Elizabethan Stage* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2013), For a discussion of representations of Elizabeth as Deborah see: A. N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558–1585* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 23 – 31, S. Hamrick, *The Catholic Imaginary and the Cults of Elizabeth, 1558 – 1582* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009), p. 102, J. King, ‘The Godly Woman in Elizabethan Iconography’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, no. 38 (1985), pp. 50 – 53.

<sup>8</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 70/29 fol. 51r (Thomas Nicolas to Sir William Chamberlain, 16 August 1561).

prospects of Moreno's daughter.<sup>9</sup> In an act of revenge the Moreno family reported Kingsmill and Nicholls to Gran Canaria's inquisitor on 12 September 1560 for heretical beliefs. The letter and accusations were a part of Nicholls's plea that Chamberlain 'inform the King of Spain how Her Majesty is reported and of false witnesses accused of his subjects in Canary'.<sup>10</sup> In 1564 Nicholls was moved for trial by the Bishop of Seville but it was not until January 1565 that, with the assistance of Chamberlain, he was finally acquitted.<sup>11</sup> Nicholls may have thought that preaching that Elizabeth was the Antichrist would garner more attention than charges of heresy against two merchant traders. This is supported by the fact that Nicholls presented the accusations of how Elizabeth was described by the inquisitors and the story of the friar in a separate paragraph to the rest of his account of his and Kingsmill's troubles. It was distinct from rather than woven into the complaints. What is remarkable about the accusation is the date – 1561. This allegation was made at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, nine years before the excommunication and before the persecution of Catholics had really begun. Elizabeth's gender also complicates the allegation. As Elizabeth was a woman she was more often identified as Jezebel than Antichrist because tradition held that Antichrist would be male.<sup>12</sup> That this probably false allegation was made to gain attention may suggest that it was deliberately eye-catching and provocative and therefore that these kinds of allegations were not that widespread.

The notion that in the Spanish territories Elizabeth was called Jezebel was an enduring one. Thirty-five years later a remarkably similar allegation was made. In a letter to the Attorney General Sir Edward Coke on 25 February 1596 one Richard Vennard, a gentleman being detained in the Fleet prison for debt, made an interesting counter-accusation against those to whom he was indebted. Vennard claimed that while riding with Thomas Dymock and Tristram Cotterill on 20 September 1594 in Hampshire the discussion turned to the Spanish and the

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<sup>9</sup> R. C. D. Baldwin, 'Nicholls, Thomas (1532–1601)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20124>  
 [Accessed 5 Feb. 2015].

<sup>10</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 70/29 fol.52r (Thomas Nicolas to Sir William Chamberlain, 16 August 1561).

<sup>11</sup> R. C. D. Baldwin, 'Nicholls, Thomas (1532–1601)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008  
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20124>  
 [Accessed 5 Feb. 2015].

<sup>12</sup> This tradition was based on the description of Antichrist as 'the man of sin' in 2 Thessalonians 2. The idea that Antichrist would be a man was popularised in the 10<sup>th</sup> century by Adso of Montier-en-Den in his *Libellus de Antichristo*.

recently discovered plot against the queen by Dr. Lopez. Vennard claimed that Dymock lamented the failure of the plot and suggested a new plot was at hand and rode off. On Dymock's departure Vennard maintained that Cotterill 'broke into speeches against the Queen denying the supremisy and that the pope was hed of the church alledging sundry reasons to prove the same. And sayd that in Spayn the queen was commonly called the whore of babilon'.<sup>13</sup> It is noteworthy that Vennard appears to have blamed anonymous individuals in Spain and did not directly accuse Cotterill himself but only implied that he gave assent to those calling Elizabeth the Whore of Babylon. This may have been to make his accusation more convincing as Vennard alleged that Cotterill uttered this after 'denying the supremisy' and arguing 'that the pope was he[a]d of the church alledging sundry reasons to prove the same'. However, Thomas Dymock and Tristram Cotterill do not appear to have been called in for questioning over these accusations. This is significant particularly because a plot was said to be afoot. The apparent ease with which Coke dismissed the allegation may suggest that it was unique and unbelievable or it may indicate that Coke was so accustomed to these types of allegations that he gave it no further thought. Coke's dismissal of the allegations, rather than suggesting that they were not credible in themselves, may have been because of the legal history between Cotterell, Dymock and Vennard. It appears that Vennard was using the accusation of treason, to which he was the only witness, in an attempt to remove his enemies and settle a grudge. It may be telling that he believed terming the Queen Jezebel would have achieved his aims.

The allegation that someone had called Elizabeth Jezebel was also made in Rouen, a place with a history of tensions between England, which supported French Calvinists, and Spain, which supported French Catholics. Rouen had a volatile past marked by violence over the course of the French Wars of Religion. Early modern Rouen was a place where feelings and language were heightened by religious tensions and in living memory, in 1591, the English had assisted French Protestants in laying siege to the city and its Catholic inhabitants. In 1602 William Willaston, an English merchant and informant, alerted Secretary Cecil from Rouen that a Patrick Dones had often called Elizabeth Jezebel.<sup>14</sup> Patrick Dones, according to Willaston, was an Irishman who had been in Rouen for five years marrying during that time.

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<sup>13</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/256 fol. 135r (Statement of R. Vennard).

<sup>14</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/283a fol. 32.r. (William Willaston to Secretary Cecil, 16/26 January 1602).

Dones was sporadically employed and Willaston believed he was maintained by Irish rebels and seminary priests while sending mass books to Ireland via Newhaven in East Sussex.<sup>15</sup> The case of Patrick Dones highlights the frustrations which informants faced and may illuminate why so few allegations of calling Elizabeth Jezebel appear to have been tried in court. Willaston complained that he had informed one Mr Winwood of Dones seditious and slanderous speech but was advised not to pursue the matter because Dones would never speak in the presence of two people and the law required two witnesses.<sup>16</sup> This suggests that accusations that the queen was the apocalyptic whore were more common than the state papers and court records would lead us to believe. That the allegation would have had to be made in front of two willing informants before action was taken means that denunciations of Elizabeth as Jezebel may have been a relatively common utterance which went both unreported and under-recorded. Early modern Catholics deliberately obscured their activity and we may never have access to the full picture.

However, in this instance it may have been Willaston who was not in possession of all the facts. A Patrick Doffe, of which Dones is a possible misspelling, was an Irishman from Tredath who had resided in Rouen for eight years marrying and having five children. Doffe had written to Sir Robert Cecil in 1601 complaining that he had been libelled as an act of revenge by one Coxe of Newcastle, one Warner of London and one Humphrey Havle of London who, after an altercation, had spread rumours that Doffe had often termed the Queen Jezebel.<sup>17</sup> Willaston does not appear to have known that three ‘witnesses’, or four if we include Willaston, had claimed that Doffe had uttered those words. Doffe had been apprehended in London and petitioned Cecil from gaol for relief and to dispute the rumours in 1601, a year before Willaston sent his claim. This means that either Doffe and Dones are two separate people with remarkably similar backgrounds and names, accused of the same crime and residing in Rouen at one stage during the same time, or that Willaston is making a belated or false accusation. It may be that the rumour of Dones’/Doffe’s speech had a long afterlife, particularly

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> R. A. Roberts (ed.), *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*. Vol. 11, 1601 (London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1906), p. 574, Entry Number 1410 (Patrick Doffe, of Rouen, to Sir Robert Cecil).

amongst competing merchants; another possibility is that Cecil had enquired into the rumour while Doffe was in prison.

Although each allegation considered was made in a different period of Elizabeth's reign, common threads emerge. All three accusations were made by merchants, which may imply that in their circumstances and movements they had access to ideas which were less under the authorities' control. It might indicate that the authorities feared or expected that such ideas would be exchanged in these environments. All three alleged that the Queen was termed Jezebel either in Spain or by a suspected supporter of the Spanish, which suggests this was from whence the authorities believed such rhetoric would emerge. Lastly all three were involved in a trade dispute of some kind and either wished to gain attention and support for their side or eliminate their enemies, which indicates what the accusers believed accusations like this could achieve. The 1561 allegation is striking as it was not until the 1570 Bull of Excommunication that suspicion of Catholics and their loyalty to Elizabeth grew to such an extent as to cause the authorities to act. Accusations, whether true or false, are important because they communicate what was believable and what was expected. Someone is unlikely to make an allegation which is implausible, particularly if the motivation is part of a wider conspiracy against a rival. However, the fact that these accusations survive raises questions and they may tell us more about William Cecil's interests than what was really happening.

The notion that the recording of the previous accusations reflected Cecil's interests is supported by the assize records. The assize records indicate that if Elizabeth was termed a whore in England it was normally in connection with her relationship with the Earl of Leicester or her supposed activities at court, not apocalypticism. On 23 June 1585 at the East Grinstead Assize one Robert Threle of Bexhill was indicted for seditious words and supposedly saying that 'the Queenes is an hoore, yea and an arrant hoore'.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, on 12 July 1585 at the Croydon Assize Alice Austen, a spinster of Southwark, was remanded for allegedly declaring that 'the Quene is no mayd and she hath had thre[e] sons by the Earle of Leicester'.<sup>19</sup> Almost

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<sup>18</sup> J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Calendar of Assize Records; Sussex Indictments Elizabeth I* (London, Stationary Office, 1975), vol. I, p. 197.

<sup>19</sup> J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Calendar of Assize Records; Sussex Indictments Elizabeth I* (London, Stationary Office, 1980), vol.5, p. 276.

four years later in May 1589 a Protestant preacher, Wylton, was accused at the Essex Assize by the testimony of the tailor John Weste and the yeoman Thomas Wendon that he had called the queen a whore in the Church of Aldham based on her enjoyment of dance.<sup>20</sup> These individual lewd comments continued into the 1590s. On the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1594 Richard Collens of Buxted, a shoemaker, was indicted for supposedly declaring to Margery Vikers ‘that she would make him crowch and kneele before his betters’ and when Collens asked before whom ‘she sayd before the best in England. And then the sayd Collens sayd he would not kneele before a whore’.<sup>21</sup> This mosaic of evidence suggests that Elizabeth’s gender, refusal to marry and supposed sexual indiscretions were used as an insult and expression of dissatisfaction. However, it does not appear that the word carried eschatological connotations. This may be because those making the claim that Elizabeth was a whore were not, at least overtly, motivated by Catholicism. Nevertheless, within England there do appear to be religious undertones to some alleged claims that the queen was a whore. In 1586 the yeoman Thomas Lee Ballewe was sentenced at the Croydon Assize to be imprisoned for 5 months, pilloried, and to have both ears cut off for scandalous words. Ballewe had allegedly declared in public that ‘the papists in oure country saye that your Queene is a hoore’.<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that Ballewe described Elizabeth as ‘your Queene’ but England as ‘oure country’. Ballewe’s claim that Elizabeth was considered a whore by English Catholics would support this chapter’s main contention. On 11 January 1592 at the Canterbury Sessions John Massee of Minster, a tailor, was indicted and sentenced to whipping for his alleged claim that ‘there would never be a myrrie world before there were a new alteracon... and by gods wounds, the Queen ys a whore’.<sup>23</sup> Although this allegation combined a desire for religious change with the notion that Elizabeth was a whore it did not have eschatological undertones. However, four years later and just over 26 miles away alleged seditious words were explicitly apocalyptic. In 1599 at the Rochester Assize the labourer Thomas Farryngton of Leysdown on Sea was sentenced to be pillored and have his ears cut off for his supposed assertion that ‘the Queenes majestie was Antechrist and therefore she is throwne dowe into hell’.<sup>24</sup> Some individuals across the religious spectrum - Protestant, the hotter sort of Protestant or Catholic – all appear to be in agreement

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<sup>20</sup> J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Calendar of Assize Records; Sussex Indictments Elizabeth I* (London, Stationary Office, 1975), vol. I, p. 740.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 289.

<sup>22</sup> J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Calendar of Assize Records; Sussex Indictments Elizabeth I* (London, Stationary Office, 1980), vol.5, p. 290.

<sup>23</sup> J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Calendar of Assize Records; Sussex Indictments Elizabeth I* (London, Stationary Office, 1979), vol.4, p. 336.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p. 440.

that Elizabeth was a whore. Yet it seems that it was only at the peripheries of England and abroad that Elizabeth was considered a specific eschatological whore.

### **The Excommunication**

The excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570 had a significant effect on Catholic perceptions of her and on the development of Catholic apocalypticism and eschatology. Pius V's Bull *Regnans in excelsis* issued on 25 February 1570 described Elizabeth as

**the pretended queen of England and the servant of iniquity ... with whom as in a sanctuary the most pernicious of all have found refuge.**

This very woman, having **seized the crown and monstrously usurped** the place of supreme head of the Church in all England to gather with the chief authority and jurisdiction belonging to it, has once again reduced this same kingdom- which had already been restored to the Catholic faith and to good fruits- to a **miserable ruin**.<sup>25</sup>

Elizabeth was described as 'the servant of iniquity', not an ill-advised ruler or a heretic who could be reformed but one who actively assisted evil. The use of a definite article – 'the' – rather than an indefinite article such as 'a' or 'an' implied a certainty in the identification and that Elizabeth is the particular servant of iniquity rather than being a member of a general group of evil rulers. The Bull *Regnans in excelsis* was a public document and therefore the language would have been carefully crafted and an active decision made to use a definite article over an indefinite article. The term 'the servant of iniquity' was indicative of the Whore of Babylon as the Apocalypse reported her role was to seduce men to damnation and to recruit the kings of the earth and merchants to share in her sins. The notion that she had created 'a sanctuary the most pernicious of all have found refuge' was similar to the descriptions of the apocalyptic city of Babylon contained in the Bible which the Whore ruled over. The claim that she had 'monstrously usurped' the crown reinforced the perception of her as demonic rather than simply human while the linguistic embellishment of 'monstrously' is suggestive of the

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<sup>25</sup> My own emboldening, Pius V, *Regnans in excelsis*, St. Peter's at Rome, 25 February 1570  
<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius05/p5regnans.htm>  
 [Accessed 01/09/14].



monstrous beasts of the Apocalypse. It therefore appears that the Pope was important in encouraging the identification of Elizabeth as the Whore of Babylon from the Apocalypse.

The specific crimes of Elizabeth that Pius V detailed in the excommunication could be read apocalyptically and may have alluded to the idea that she was the Whore of Babylon. The charges Pius levied at Elizabeth were that she had ‘oppressed the followers of the Catholic faith; instituted false preachers and ministers of impiety; abolished the sacrifice of the mass, prayers, fasts, choice of meats, celibacy, and Catholic ceremonie’.<sup>26</sup> The apocalyptic Whore was described in the Apocalypse as oppressing the saints and the elect, becoming intoxicated by their blood. The triple idea of Babylon, whore and oppression of God’s people was a recurrent motif in the Bible and is therefore likely to have struck a chord with Catholics well versed in the Bible. For example Psalm 137 related how those taken captive from Jerusalem into Babylon shall rejoice when the daughter of Babylon is to be destroyed by God. The topic of oppression was quickly succeed in the text of the Bull by the detailing of Elizabeth’s crime of instituting false preachers and ministers of impiety, which underscored her apocalyptic nature. Although false prophets are more immediately associated with Antichrist they were also believed to be a feature of the apocalyptic city of Babylon and the Whore. Added to this the scarlet beast which the Whore rides in Apocalypse 17:3 was described as having all the names of blasphemy, which could be considered another form of false teaching, on its seven heads. When Pius detailed how Elizabeth had removed the Catholic ceremonies and mass, and therefore the perceived means to salvation, the Pope may have been subtly suggesting the idea that Elizabeth was behaving like the apocalyptic Whore.

It is noteworthy that the 1570 Bull used markedly similar language and accusations of the same crimes against Elizabeth as the annotations to chapter II of the Douai-Rheims translation of the Apocalypse.<sup>27</sup> However, there was a notable difference as the Bull blamed Elizabeth for the troubles in England whereas the 1582 annotations blamed the sins of the

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<sup>26</sup> Pius V, *Regnans in excelsis*, St. Peter's at Rome, 25 February 1570  
<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius05/p5regnans.htm>  
 [Accessed 01/09/14].

<sup>27</sup> Apocalypse, Chapter II, Annotation no. 5, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 703.

prelates for the rise of Protestantism. This difference could be due to the perceived audience of each text. The Bull was in Latin and thus only the well-educated could access the message directly without it being mediated. The Bible on the other hand was accessible to those who read English and despite reading and interpretation being guided by the annotations and marginal notes the text could be interpreted by the individual. A concern about potential misinterpretation and subsequent unauthorised action may be one reason why the supposed cause of the rise of Protestantism in England varied in the two texts.

### **Influence of the Bull**

The excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570 was of great consequence for apocalyptic and eschatological perceptions of her. A memorandum in the Vatican archives which was issued in Autumn 1570 from Brussels in the wake of the excommunication was clear that ‘she is the whore depicted in the Apocalypse, with the wine of whose prostitution the kings of the earth are drunk; and seeing that meanwhile she is drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, significant indeed is the figure of that whore’.<sup>28</sup> The strength of the language strongly suggests that this was intended to be a private document, addressed to those leading the Catholic Church and Catholic monarchs, rather than a public document. The clear identification of Elizabeth as the apocalyptic Whore is in stark contrast with the language of public documents such as *Regnans in excelsis* or the marginal notes to the Douai-Rheims Apocalypse which used intimations and allusions. That this communication was written in the context of the excommunication is attested to by the fact that the excommunication was explicitly mentioned eight times in the document, showing its impact on those both participating in and observing English Catholic affairs. The possible authors include Thomas Harding who was in Louvain at the time, Thomas Stapleton who was in Douai, and Nicholas Sanders who was in Louvain and an avid supporter of the Bull. Louvain is 25 kilometres east of Brussels whereas Douai is around 142 kilometres south-west. The geography suggests that it is more likely that either Sanders or Harding wrote the memorandum.

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Reflection on the State of Catholics in England’, ‘Appendix’, in: J. M. Rigg (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Vatican Archives*, Volume 2, 1572-1578 (London, 1926), pp. 549 – 569.

Sanders's strong interest in Scottish affairs further suggest that he may be the author. The author explained that 'Our cause has been not a little helped by this sentence declaratory of excommunication' and gave the example that 'for now the English nobles who went into exile in Scotland have rejected all the terms of peace earnestly and handsomely proffered them by Elizabeth'.<sup>29</sup> The document directly referred to the Northern Rebellion of 1569 and it is interesting that this clerical leader connected with the affairs of the Catholic Church described the uprising openly in a dispatch under the banner of 'Our cause'. The exiles from the rebellion who were in Scotland at the time this memorandum was written included two of the leaders, the Earl of Northumberland who was later to be captured and conveyed to Elizabeth for execution in 1572, and the Earl of Westmorland who would escape to Flanders. Reprisals were swift and stringent on Catholic families involved in the uprising and in turn caused Catholics to turn their hopes to foreign assistance in deposing Elizabeth. The Bull did not reach the rebels in time, and the revolt had long been quashed before the Bull had made its way into England.

The memorandum was an appeal for foreign assistance to remove Elizabeth. The author declared that 'such are our sins and theirs that neither are they for the love of Christ minded to lend us aid that we deserve not; nor are we... able to evoke any man's aid, we shall account it a great boon if they at any rate desist from rendering further service to their and our common enemy'.<sup>30</sup> The author viewed the lack of foreign assistance as providential and suggested that monarchs who did not assist against the 'common enemy' revealed their own sinfulness and God's displeasure with them as monarchs. The concept of providence and God's providential punishment was powerful in the early modern world. Geoffrey Parker has convincingly argued that 'In Philip II's world everything had a direct supernatural cause', which led the king to continue in some policies and actions despite numerous failures and setbacks.<sup>31</sup> The memorandum's author highlighted how it was not just assistance in the form of finance or armies but the isolation of Elizabeth which was desirable. The memorandum claimed that

to say nothing of swords let them at least recall their ambassadors,  
lest all the Catholic world should pay the penalty of this most

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<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> G. Parker, *The World is Not Enough: The Imperial Vision of Philip II Spain*, The Twenty-Second Charles Edmondson Historical Lectures (Texas, Markham Press Fund, 2001), p. 22 and G. Parker, 'The Place of Tudor England in the Messianic Vision of Philip II of Spain: The Prothero Lecture', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 12 (2002), p. 191.

grievous scandal; to wit, that she, whose society plebeians are bound on pain of excommunication to avoid, is by Princes, who should lead others by their example, courted with the utmost reverence as still lawful Queen.<sup>32</sup>

The pragmatic proposal to recall ambassadors indicates that the author was someone with good knowledge of the mechanisms of power and how diplomacy functioned. The added extra weight to the call for action against Elizabeth as an appeal to self-interest as Elizabeth on the throne of England would affect the domestic affairs of other nations. The author of the memorandum strongly called for the diplomatic isolation of Elizabeth but viewed this as only the beginning, and stated that ‘should the Catholic and Most Christian kings recall their ambassadors from Elizabeth's accursed company, and desist from honouring her by their presence, this would seem to be an excellent beginning of the business itself’.<sup>33</sup> The ultimate goal was the absolute destruction of Elizabeth and the reconversion of England to Catholicism. That this report of the conditions of Catholics in England was an appeal for aid explains the strength of the language used and the extreme nature of the identification. Elizabeth was to be considered not a bad ruler but evil and accursed; political relationships with her were not a necessary evil but rather ‘most grievous’ and a crime against God.

The missive was a fierce critique of Catholic monarchs, showing the passion of the author for the cause of English Catholics and potentially his position, as the language was markedly unreserved. It described Catholic monarchs as being ‘with the wine of prostitution the kings of the earth are drunk’ once again alluding to Elizabeth as the Whore of Babylon.<sup>34</sup> The deliberate apocalyptic nature of the description may have been to emphasise the need for action and the speed with which it should be undertaken. The author charged that ‘They wait upon an accursed and excommunicated woman with honours and gifts’.<sup>35</sup> The author detailed how ‘We expected from the Christian Princes not indeed immense armies but at long based false hopes on the reedy staff of Egypt’.<sup>36</sup> The reference to ‘the reedy staff of Egypt’ was a citation from the Old Testament books of Isaiah and Ezekiel and emphasised the need to rely

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<sup>32</sup> ‘Reflection on the State of Catholics in England’, ‘Appendix’, in: J. M. Rigg (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Vatican Archives*, Volume 2, 1572-1578, (London, 1926), pp. 549 – 569.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

on God rather than kings for relief.<sup>37</sup> The use of Isaiah is significant because Isaiah chapters 40 to 55 referred back to the exodus and comforted that once the people of the Lord had paid for their sins the Lord shall return in the sight of all of mankind, and implied that the author may be of a similar opinion regarding contemporary Catholics.<sup>38</sup> The critique levelled at Catholic monarchs indicated that the author did not fear criticising them and felt in a position to do so. The text distanced itself from the censures by recording them as part of a report instead of addressing monarchs personally and directly, however, as this memorandum appeals for aid and proposes pragmatic political solutions we may suppose it was intended for the view of Catholic monarchs. Elizabeth was described apocalyptically and the reproaches of the monarchs were eschatological.

Elizabeth was presented as standing in a line of women typological of the Whore of Babylon. The memorandum characterised her as a new Herodias when the author asked

what of the new bait, nay rather an old one, which this **Herodias** is of late proffering. She is again talking of nuptials: again she has sent Cobham junior to the Emperor's Court, not that she is minded, it is said, to receive a man into her house so much as to deceive men outside of it. Moreover she intimates I know not what hope of Catholicizing herself, to the end that by thus temporizing she may gain something.<sup>39</sup>

The story of Herodias, like that of the Old Testament Jezebel and the Whore of Babylon in the Apocalypse, contains the tropes of the killing of God's prophets and seducing kings to damnation.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Herodias had been associated with a cult and coven of witches

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<sup>37</sup> Isaiah 30 – 36, 29:16. This reference also alluded to the ten plagues of Egypt which were supposedly sent by God to punish the obstinate Pharaoh and force the release of the Hebrews from captivity.

<sup>38</sup> Isaiah 40:1 – 6.

<sup>39</sup> 'Reflection on the State of Catholics in England', 'Appendix', in: 'Reflection on the State of Catholics in England', 'Appendix', in: J. M. Rigg (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Vatican Archives*, Volume 2, 1572-1578, (London, 1926), pp. 549 – 569.

<sup>40</sup> According to the gospels of Mark and Mathew, Herodias was responsible for the death of John the Baptist because he preached against her illegal marriage to Herod Antipas, the brother of her first husband whom she divorced, Herod Philip. Herodias and Herod Philip, sometimes referred to as Herod II, had a daughter named Salome. The gospels claimed that, at a party organised by Herod Antipas, Herodias made Salome perform a seductive dance which caused Herod Antipas to promise to give Salome anything she wanted as reward. Salome was instructed by Herodias to ask Herod Antipas for the head of John the Baptist which he subsequently brought to her on a platter despite his respect for the preacher. As Jezebel, the Old Testament wife of King Ahab, killed Elijah and persuaded Ahab to abandon God and worship Baal, Herodias persuaded Herod Antipas to kill John the Baptist and discard the law of God, while the Whore of Babylon was prophesised to kill Enoch and Elias and to persuade all the kings of the earth to forsake God and worship iniquity.

since the Middle Ages and thus the name invoked ideas about sexual depravity, demonism and dangerous women.<sup>41</sup> It is significant that Elizabeth was being placed in this lineage and it is noteworthy that this was before the killing of Campion or the introduction of the penal laws. Similar to the typological understandings of Antichrist previously analysed in this thesis, Herodias expressed a typological understanding of the evil woman in the Bible and in history.<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth was thus portrayed as typological of the Whore of Babylon.

The memorandum placed itself in the context of the proposed marriage match between Elizabeth and Archduke Charles II of Austria when it stated ‘she is again talking of nuptials’.<sup>43</sup> By the date of the memorandum the match was already over as Elizabeth was unwilling to marry due to Charles’s strong Catholicism and support for the Counter Reformation and Maximilian’s disapproval of the match. Although historians have speculated regarding the extent of Elizabeth’s true interest in each match, the author of the memorandum was sure that any proposed match with a Catholic was a political ploy. The missive argued that the ‘Catholics that she has at home she ruthlessly slaughters: will it then be believed that she loves those that are abroad, and that she is minded, well nigh an old woman as she now is, to love, and so loving to be united in marriage with them?’.<sup>44</sup> The author’s determination to prevent such a match may explain the focus on Elizabeth’s supposed sexual sins and the naming of her as ‘the whore of Babylon’ may be an attempt to warn potential Catholic suitors not to be seduced by her. The author wove in references to current affairs, such as the recent marriage negotiations, with descriptions of Elizabeth as the Whore depicted in the Apocalypse.<sup>45</sup> This placed current affairs in the timeline of the Book of the Apocalypse, which reinforced the idea that Elizabeth was the Whore described in the prophecy.

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<sup>41</sup> C. Lecouteux, *Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead* (Rochester, Inner Traditions, 2011), p. 96. For example, Bernadino of Siena, quoting the canon *Episcopi* preached that ‘among these most impious wild brutes are some most wicked women... who believe and openly profess that they go riding... with Diana (*or Iobiana or Herodias*)’. Bernardino’s sermons focused on the social sins of society and averting God’s apocalyptic wrath from the world. See: F. Mormando, *The Preacher’s Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (London, University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 67, p. 268 fn.72.

<sup>42</sup> Typological understandings of the Antichrist is discussed on pp. 111 – 113.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Reflection on the State of Catholics in England’, ‘Appendix’, in: J. M. Rigg (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Vatican Archives*, Volume 2, 1572 – 1578 (London, 1926), pp. 549 – 569, Archduke Charles II of Austria was the son of the Emperor Ferdinand, the brother of Maximilian II, Holy Roman Emperor.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Reflection on the State of Catholics in England’, ‘Appendix’, in: J. M. Rigg (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Vatican Archives*, Volume 2, 1572 – 1578 (London, 1926), pp. 549 – 569.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*

The author of the 1570 memorandum also underscored the concept of Elizabeth's accursed state by referring to her odour. A remarkable passage described how

since the nobles of England recognize that Elizabeth is a woman, and not only so, but woman subject to many diseases contracted by her inordinate luxuriousness, and, it is said, vastly increased since her excommunication by the Apostolic See, insomuch that those who are next her person are suffused by a grievous smell issuing from her s[k]in, they all begin to regard her with disfavour.<sup>46</sup>

The charge that Elizabeth was riddled with 'diseases contracted by her inordinate luxuriousness' sheds light on the author's perception of Elizabeth and is reminiscent of the description of the Whore of Babylon in Apocalypse 17 and 18:3. That Elizabeth's supposed diseases were caused by 'her inordinate luxuriousness' suggested that they were both the product and expression of sin, an idea which was emphasised by the claim that they had increased since her excommunication. The alleged 'grievous smell issuing from her s[k]in' implied that the purported diseases could be a providential punishment from God and would indicate Elizabeth's evil nature. Smells were morally charged in early modern England and Christian culture as a whole.<sup>47</sup> Saints were believed to have the odour of sanctity and sin had a scent. Elizabeth's supposed stench was significant for Catholic conceptions of the future as it denoted her destiny and afforded others time to alter their actions and therefore their outcomes from God's judgement.

The influence of the Bull on eschatological perceptions of Elizabeth was not restricted to the author of the memorandum. In the correspondence between nuncios and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church Elizabeth was referred to as that 'impious Jezebel'. The post-script to

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Robert Persons quoted Saint Bernard who described how 'sweete Jesus... the fresh and odoriferous smell of thy wonderfull clemencie doth allure us to runne after thee', see: R. Persons, *The seconde parte of the booke of Christian exercise, appertayning to resolution. Or a Christian directorie, guiding all men to their salvation* (London, Printed by Iohn Charlwoode and Simon Waterson, 1590), p. 419, The annotations to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles endorsed the idea that Saints would be recognised by pleasant odours while explaining Mary's assumption, see: *The New Testament*, M. Gregory (trans.), (Douai, 1582), p. 291.

a letter written by Michael Bonelli, Cardinal Alessandrino, to John Babtista Castagna, the Archbishop of Rossano and Nuncio in Spain, on 4 January 1572 asked if

this might be the right moment to carry into effect that which I remember having discussed with you, to wit, the disposing of the Princess of Portugal, the Catholic King's sister, to Monsieur, with the title of King and Queen of England, thus by means of France and Spain in concert depriving that impious Jezebel of possession of the realm, as she is already deprived of title to it.<sup>48</sup>

Cardinal Alessandrino's reference to the Bull reinforces the idea that the Bull had important implications for Catholic apocalypticism and eschatology as his language is indicative that he perceived her to be the apocalyptic Jezebel. Furthermore he was willing to identify her as such to one of his colleagues. The use of 'that' rather than 'an' suggests a specific identification while the combination of 'impious' and Jezebel would give more force to the term. It would classify Elizabeth as exceptionally sinful and wicked, an antonym of the 'Catholic King' and beyond redemption. The Cardinal politicised this identification as he had discussed with the nuncio the means of removing Elizabeth through the intervention of France and Spain.

Cardinal Alessandrino was both an important and controversial religious and political figure. Alessandrino was the nephew of Pius V and appointed by him as Legate to Philip II in Spain. This was a crucial role because of the ongoing power struggle between the Pope and the King, it is thus not surprising that Alessandrino's apocalyptic language reflected the apocalyptic language present in the Bull.<sup>49</sup> Alessandrino was a contentious figure. Historians have strongly debated his role, if any, in the St. Bartholomew's massacre in France 24 August 1572. Alessandrino was in France in the lead up to the massacre. In February 1572 he tried to prevent the marriage of Marguerite de Valois to the Protestant Henry of Navarre and frustrate the treaty of Blois which resulted in an Anglo-French alliance. If Alessandrino had a role to play in the massacre it may add another, albeit small, layer to the possible eschatological motivations behind the slaughter because of Alessandrino's previous use of apocalyptic and

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<sup>48</sup> Vatican, Vat Arch. Nunt. Di Spagna, vol. vi. f. 672r, 'Rome: January 1572', in: J. M. Rigg (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Relating To English Affairs in the Vatican Archives*, Volume 2, 1572 – 1578 (London, 1926), pp. 1 – 4.

<sup>49</sup> J. E. Tazon, *The Life and Times of Thomas Stuckeley (1525-78)* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2003), p. 164, S. Poole, *Juan de Ovando: Governing the Spanish Empire in the Reign of Philip II* (Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), p. 133.



eschatological language when describing Protestants. Denis Crouzet in his work *Les Guerriers de Dieu* has argued that the violence which marked the French Wars of Religion, and in particular the massacre, should be viewed as the result of an eschatological anxiety which pervaded French culture and had grown in intensity during the previous decades. Larissa Taylor presents a more balanced picture in her assessment: 'While it is highly doubtful that the great majority of French society was ever completely engulfed in eschatological anguish, there can be no doubt that the atmosphere of fear, intrigue and rumour... facilitated the downward spiral into violence'.<sup>50</sup> Crouzet may have over-emphasised the eschatological anxiety present in French Catholic works to the neglect of other more prominent themes but the sense of eschatological apprehension was there and should thus be taken into account. Alessandrino's possible role in the events in France brings his description of Elizabeth as the 'impious Jezebel' into sharper focus and suggests that this was not a spontaneous remark but part of a wider Catholic apocalyptic and eschatological worldview which had a political edge.

It is possible that a decade after the Bull and memorandum were issued the idea that Elizabeth was an eschatological figure was still being communicated out of Rome. Sir Henry Brooke, Lord Cobham, the resident ambassador in France from 1579, instructed Walsingham and the Secretaries on April 8 1580 that 'The papists write from Rome to there associats resident in these parts that they should be of good comfort wth the form of the following... That God tryth his people many ways as it appeareth by sondry calamities and misfortunes wch have happened to the Church of God'.<sup>51</sup> Cobham claimed that the papists consoled their French co-religionists to

let all good princes be well assured that the hereticks of England shall not be suffered to contynue longe in there mischievous proceedings, but that a way shall be devised to cutte them of... I meane the usurper of authorities the puddle of lasciviousness, the very Antichriste and the wicked counsailors and minions who allwayes maintain the enemyes of god and of the church. The hereticall devises shall by godes myghte be withstanding and then by politicall meanes cutte of.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> L. J. Taylor, *Heresy and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth Century Paris: Francois le Picart and the Begginings of the Catholic Reformation* (Leiden, Brill, 1999), p. 222.

<sup>51</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 78/4A fol. 44r ([Cobham] to the Secretaries, 8 April 1580).

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 44v ([Cobham] to the Secretaries, 8 April 1580).

This was as much detail as Cobham provided. Both frustratingly and interestingly Cobham does not say whose letters he had intercepted, or where the information had come from. Cobham did not describe this consolation as a rumour but presented it as a fact and as something written from Rome. It is possible that such a letter was sent but if it is not a true allegation Cobham's motivations and choices in constructing this extract may reveal something about early modern Catholics. Cobham would have needed to create something which would have been believable, which suggests that the passage reflected his current presumptions or was based on what, in his experience, early modern Catholics would write from Rome to France. The providential, eschatological and apocalyptic language present in the passage is arguably thus either what was written or what was likely to have been written by early modern Catholics. Cobham may have thought that describing Elizabeth as 'the very Antichriste' would attract attention and justify his remaining in his post, at least until the danger had been uncovered. The sentence that Elizabeth would be 'by politicall meanes cutte of as by godes helpe yow shall heare more hereafter' suggests that a plot was afoot and more correspondence was to come. Cobham was a costly informant because he was a prolific writer of reports, to the extent that Gary McClellan Bell has argued that he held 'the record for detailed and unassimilated reporting of virtually anything that came to his attention', with a particular focus on rumours regarding the activities of English Catholic exiles.<sup>53</sup> Despite his prolific reporting, Cobham had a failing in the information he sent as he did not encrypt it adequately. Previous letters had gone astray and come to the attention of Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester.<sup>54</sup> This may be one reason why Cobham did not record who provided the information or who sent the letter from which the passage quoted above was taken. Cobham may have recognised his own failings in encoding his correspondence and did not wish for others to be aware of his knowledge before the details of the plans had emerged. Either explanation suggests that early modern Catholics described Elizabeth as an apocalyptic agent and communicated this to their co-religionists in different countries. The idea that Elizabeth was 'the very Antichriste' was an incentive to act politically from both sides because both Protestants and Catholics recognised the danger in labelling a ruler as such. Eschatology was a language of political action.

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<sup>53</sup> G. McClellan Bell, 'The Men and Their Rewards in Elizabethan Diplomatic Service, 1558 – 1585' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1974), p. 211.

<sup>54</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 78/4A fol. 72r (Cobham to Walsingham, 23 May 1581).

As well as being a language of political action eschatology was also a language of religious concern and individual religious action, particularly separation from the Church of England. In 1582 Robert Persons included in his work *the Christian Exercise* a subtle apocalyptic attack on the Church of England. Persons claimed that ‘If thou walke the waye of Babylon, most certaine it is, that thou shalt never arrive at the gates of Hierusalem, except thou change thie course’.<sup>55</sup> The *Christian Exercise* was written by Persons following his mission to England in 1581. This suggests that Persons used apocalypticism to encourage direct rebellion through nonconformity as the question of Church attendance was a significant topic for the English mission.<sup>56</sup> The evidence indicates that ‘In print and for the record, the rhetoric was unyielding, the commandments rigid, the penalties condign. In the chapel and the confessional, however, sins might be absolved, lapses condoned, necessity relieved’.<sup>57</sup> Robert Zaller has claimed that ‘the militancy of the mission’s pamphleteers was not a strategy for accommodation, but for victory’.<sup>58</sup> Richard Verstegan used eschatological ideas in his discussion with Persons about possible pamphlets and books in April 1593. Verstegan asked Persons

Yf my leasure a little better served me... me thinckes I coulde out of sundry our late Englishe hereticall bookes... drawe foorth the very espetiall matter to move any indifferent Protestant to become doubtfull of the truthe in either the Puritane or Protestant religion, and this treatise I would entitle thus:

“The second confusion of Babilon. Wherein repugnant speeches and actions of the buylders up of a pretend Gospell are discovered”.<sup>59</sup>

Verstegan explained that ‘Against the heretikes that would prove Rome to be Babilon and the Pope the whore of Babilon, I had once a toy in my head to have controlled that allusion, and to have shewed how Albion might, by transporting the letters, seeme to be Babilon’.<sup>60</sup> Verstegan had interpreted that ‘The seven hilles, sayeth the Scripture are seven kings, ergo not seven hills;

<sup>55</sup> R. Persons, *The first booke of the Christian* (Rouen, Fr. Person’s Press, 1582), p. 121.

<sup>56</sup> V. Houlston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons’s Jesuit Polemic, 1580 – 1610* (Aldershot, Ashgate 2007), p. 26, R. Zaller, *The Discourse of Legitimacy in Early Modern England* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 107 – 108.

<sup>57</sup> R. Zaller, *The Discourse of Legitimacy in Early Modern England* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 109.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>59</sup> A. G. Petti (ed.), *The Letters and Despatches of Richard Verstegan: 1550 – 1640*, Catholic Record Society, Vol. LII (London, R. H. Johns, 1959), p. 142.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

and unto seaven kinges' governmentes hathe Albion bene devyded, and Roome never'.<sup>61</sup> When Verstegan described the Whore of Babylon he argued that the point that 'the woman sat upon a rose coloured beast, and the rose is the armes or banner of England' needed to be made and circulated.<sup>62</sup> Eschatology and the identification of Jezebel were considered by leading Catholics to be the best means to encourage non-attendance at the Church of England.

### **Mary Queen of Scots**

Similar to the Bull of Excommunication in 1570, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots was a flash point in history which caused underlying eschatological notions to bubble over into open expression. For Catholics, it confirmed Elizabeth's apocalyptic and eschatological identity and called for a decisive response. The relationship between Elizabeth and Mary had been fraught and Mary, as a figure of Catholic hope in England, potentially challenged Elizabeth's crown more following her death than in her lifetime as international Catholic powers sought to avenge her. Any discussion of Mary Queen of Scots must include France because of her important ties to that country and her French relations the Guises and the Cardinal of Lorraine who became dominant in French politics. France was also a particular concern for both the English and Spanish crowns in this period and all actions were considered with the growing power of the French in mind.<sup>63</sup> The royal crest of England was incorporated into Mary's royal arms alongside Mary's arms as Queen of Scots and France as Henry II pronounced Mary's claim to the English throne and Elizabeth's illegitimacy. This claim would cause significant, and ultimately deadly, tensions between Elizabeth, her Privy Council and Mary until Mary's death.<sup>64</sup> In 1568 Mary fled to England where Elizabeth would imprison her for eighteen and a half years before executing her at Fotheringay Castle in 1587.

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<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Following the death of her father James V of Scotland in 1542, and the subsequent instability caused by two competing regents to rule in Mary's name during her minority, the Protestant Lord Arran and the Catholic Cardinal Beaton, French aid was sought to protect the young queen and eventually Mary was moved to France in 1548. In return for French assistance and troops a marriage treaty was proposed by Henri II of France to unite the thrones of France and Scotland through the marriage of his son Francis to Mary when the then children came of age.

<sup>64</sup> Mary married the Dauphin Francis in 1558 and became queen consort in 1559 as he became King Francis II of France. The next year was to be a tragic one for Mary whose mother died in June 1560 and while Mary was still mourning this loss her husband Francis died in December 1560 causing Catherine de Medici to rule as regent for Francis II's younger brother Charles IX. Mary and Catherine had a strained relationship as the death of Henri II no longer prevented Catherine from expressing her dislike of Mary. Combined with this difficult atmosphere in France, sorrow at the loss of both her mother and husband in quick succession, the demise of Mary's mother, Mary of Guise who had been ruling as regent for Mary in Scotland, threatened a loss of control in the increasingly fragmented country.

Apocalypticism and eschatology were possibly used in private to express dissatisfaction by English Catholics in France concerned with regime change in England, particularly Catholics connected to Mary Queen of Scots. Between 1571 and 1572 Sir Francis Walsingham wrote to Lord Burghley about an agent, ‘one Darbshire, an English Jesuit in Paris’, who was in communication with both Catholics at Louvain and in Scotland. Walsingham claimed that ‘Darbshire’ had expressed that

when tyme shall convenientlye serve, to adventure ther lyves in seekinge to quyte us of that lewde woman” (meaning her majestie).  
“For,” said he, “yf she were gon, then would the hedg[e] lye oppen, wherby the good Queene that now is prisoner, in whom restethe the present right of the croune, should then easelye enjoye the same.”<sup>65</sup>

The term ‘lewde woman’ could point towards the idea that Elizabeth was being described as the Whore. The term Jezebel and the imagery of the apocalyptic Whore was employed to describe Elizabeth in the exile communities in France. Francoise de Ceville, originally the agent of William Robert de La Marck, Duke of Bouillon, had been recruited by Walsingham following his coming to England in autumn 1584 and by June 1585 Ceville was informing Walsingham of the activities of the English exiles and their French associates in Rouen. Ceville reported in one letter written between the 4 and 14 June 1585 that one Cordelier had been preaching sedition and declared the English Queen to be Jezebel.<sup>66</sup> According to Ceville this preacher had been in contact with and encouraged by John Leslie the Bishop of Ross, who was Mary Queen of Scots long term ally and suffragan bishop of Rouen during this time, and his associate de Mouchy, possibly a misspelling of Michel de Monchy the Archdeacon of Rouen and later leader of the local Catholic League.<sup>67</sup> England was very much on the exiles’ minds and a book ‘of the popish rebellious martyrs of England’ was circulated by de Monchy, which Ceville claimed contained slanderous accusations against Elizabeth and the Privy Council.<sup>68</sup> Monchy became personally connected to the English Mission when he harboured Robert Persons in 1581 following his escape and Campion’s capture. John Bossy has argued that the

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<sup>65</sup> London, British Library, Cotton Caligula C/III, fol. 230r (Q. Elizabeth, to sir Tho. Smith and Dr. Wilson; a warrant for putting Barker and Banister, two of the D. of Norfolk’s men, to the rack. (Orig.) Sept. 15, 1571).

<sup>66</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 78/14 fol. 3v (Francoise de Ceville to Walsingham, June 1585).

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, P. Arblaster, *Antwerp & the World: Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of Catholic Reformation* (Louvain, Leuven University Press, 2004), p. 24.

<sup>68</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 78/14 fol. 3v (Francoise de Ceville to Walsingham, June 1585).

residence with de Monchy was, for Persons, a political price to pay for protection and that ‘the cheque was cashed in May 1582, when he was summoned to Paris to attend a meeting between the Duke of Guise, the ambassadors in France of Spain, the Pope and Mary Queen of Scots, and William Allen’.<sup>69</sup> This meeting would make the language Cordellier used and his supposed encouragement by Michel de Monchy even more significant.

The Bishop of Ross and de Monchy were important figures in the English exile community and managed many of Mary’s invasion plans suggesting that the idea of Elizabeth as Jezebel circulated amongst those who planned for regime change and thus could have been a motivating factor. It is significant that this preaching was potentially public as this would be unusual and may indicate the depth to which religious tension ran in Rouen. The different, and almost unique, context of early modern Rouen may be the reason why this preaching was possibly done in public. It was not just one fiery preacher who characterised Elizabeth as Jezebel but also both an Archdeacon and suffragan Bishop, which may indicate the extent and acceptability of these ideas, at least in early modern Rouen.

There is an intriguing possibility that the popular and public identification of Elizabeth as the Whore of Babylon in France preceded Mary’s execution. An unnamed informant wrote to Walsingham on 5 April 1582 complaining of a text which was circulating, ‘for the book it is marvelous sedetius and hurtfull and this that I sende nowe mension of dothe describe your Q. to be the she of babillon’.<sup>70</sup> The fact that the informant used the polite term ‘she of babillon’ may suggest that the informant perceived the language of the original text as too extreme to circulate. There were other occasions when informants wrote to Walsingham from France expressing their unease about the things they were having to commit to writing.

On November 17 1583 Edward Stafford, the English ambassador in Paris, reported to Walsingham that ‘There was here upon Monday last a fowle picture of her Q. majestie sett upp she beinge on horseback her left hande holding the brydell of her horse, with her right hande

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<sup>69</sup>J. Bossy, ‘The heart of Robert Persons’, in: T. McCoog (ed.), *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early English Jesuits* (Oxford, Boydell & Brewer, 1996), p. 144.

<sup>70</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/27/1 fol. 104r ([Unknown] to Secretary Walsingham, 5 April 1582).

pullynge upp her clothes shewing her hindpartes'.<sup>71</sup> Stafford continued describing how 'Uppon her had written la Reine d'Angleterre verses underneath signifying that if any Inglyshman that passed by were asked he koulde tell what and who in the picture was'.<sup>72</sup> The image was so shocking that Stafford 'thought good to admonish your honours of a thing w[hi]ch I thought nott fitte to putt in my other letter and for my part think ytt nott good to be spread abroad'.<sup>73</sup> This picture may have been set up in the context of the failed French match and the lingering Catholic and Protestant dislike of the prospect that the Catholic Duke du Anjou could consider marrying the Protestant Elizabeth I, considered the great enemy of Catholicism. Although the prospect of this had ended in 1581, Anjou was still alive in 1583 and unmarried. The continued possibility of a marriage would offer one explanation for the representation of Elizabeth's supposed sexual promiscuity. Alternatively, the fact that the image implied that Elizabeth was lustful and promiscuous could suggest that she was being shown as the Whore of Babylon. The claim that words were written 'uppon her' is interesting as the image may have created deliberate similarities to the Whore of Babylon. According to Apocalypse 17:5 the Whore will have the word abomination or mystery written upon her. However Stafford does not report the details of the verses. Thus one can only speculate but the combination of lust, promiscuity, sexual depravity and writing 'upon her' is tantalising. This 'fowle picture' may have been erected in the context of the discovery of the Throckmorton plot for which Francis Throckmorton, a disaffected Catholic and heir to the disgraced Sir John Throckmorton, and Lord Henry Howard had been arrested for in the first week of November 1583. Even if this plot did not influence the setting up of the image it may have affected the way Stafford viewed it. The plot had strong French connections as it was hatched while Throckmorton was in Paris and the details of the plan had a French focus. Mary Queen of Scots, the Dowager of France, was to be liberated while Henri I Duke of Guise was to lead an invasion of England with French troops, while the letters between Throckmorton and Mary passed through the French ambassador in London, Michel de Castelnau. Philip II was also involved bringing in Spanish financial assistance and the promise of forces. What is striking is that these pictures, and their portrayal of Elizabeth, were deliberately public.

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<sup>71</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 78/10 fol. 79r (Stafford to Walsingham 17 November 1583).

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

The Bull of Excommunication and its apocalyptic language was perceived to have had an effect on Mary Queen of Scots's opinion of Elizabeth. This is evidenced in the instructions 'of such matters as are to be imparted by A. B. and C. D. [the Earl of Shrewsbury and Mr. Robert Beale] to the Q. of Scottes' written by Elizabeth April 6 1583.<sup>74</sup> In this charged response Elizabeth claimed that Mary had termed her a 'Tyrant, faithlesse, Antichrist, usurper of tythes, maintainer of all Seditiones, and mischeevous rebels, of God and all Catholicke Princes'.<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth explained the dangerous practicalities of such terms when she asked rhetorically 'how far for the other prynces myght have ben provoked by hir violent and malytuoss speaches we leave to others to judge'.<sup>76</sup> Elizabeth's information was probably based on a document drawn up in February 1582 entitled 'Practices against her majesty' with copied out extracts from Mary's letters as the instructions read almost word for word as the 'practices' manuscript.<sup>77</sup> Ten days later on April 16 the Earl of Shrewsbury and Robert Beale reported to Elizabeth that they had laid the charges to Mary Queen of Scots. They claimed that they had intercepted 'her letters then sent to divers in cipher, wherein she most unworthily terms your majesty a tirrant, Antichrist, a faithless usurper, and mayntayner of rebels of Catholike Princes'.<sup>78</sup> The repetitive order of the apocalyptic and eschatological terms suggests that Shrewsbury and Beale were also using the 'practices' manuscript as a basis for their report. That time was spent compiling this apocalyptic and eschatological list shows the importance attached to this language. Elizabeth recognised the influence of apocalypticism in her rhetorical question suggesting that Mary's use of apocalyptic language to describe Elizabeth could have influenced other monarchs. The combination of tyrant and Antichrist suggests that Mary presented Elizabeth as the End Time ruler rather than a general Antichrist.<sup>79</sup> Elizabeth's suspicions that Mary, or those connected to her, described her eschatologically appear to have been correct. Mary's agents described Elizabeth as Jezebel in their reporting of current affairs and communications with her. For example, in a letter to Mary deciphered on November 18 1584 Hieronymo Martelli, who also used the aliases of Nau and Samier, claimed that the king of France had written to the Pope about the league which that 'la Jesabel de Angletere' was

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<sup>74</sup>Kew, The National Archive, SP 53/12 fol. 48r (Memorial of such matters as are to be imparted by A. B. and C. D. [the Earl of Shrewsbury and Mr. Robert Beale] to the Q. of Scottes).

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.* fol. 51r.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> London, British Library, Yelverton Add. MSS 48049, fol. 253r (Practisers and practises against her Mtie).

<sup>78</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 53/12 fol. 53v (Shrewsbury and Mr Beale to Elizabeth, April 16 1583).

<sup>79</sup> This may have been missed by historians because the calendar for both documents records it wrongly as 'a antichrist' whereas both of the manuscripts use the specific term 'Antichrist'. As previously discussed in this chapter, the capitalisation of the 'a' and the removal of an indefinite article created an important distinction.



attempting to make with him and that the King would not act without the commandment of the Pope.<sup>80</sup> Apocalypticism and eschatology was in this instance a language of political critique.

Mary used eschatological and apocalyptic ideas to challenge Elizabeth politically. On questioning Mary on April 16 1583 Lord Shrewsbury and Robert Beale recorded that Mary

wiseth by way of invocation that God should retribute unto us at the tyme of his last judgement according to our deserte and demerit one towards another putting us also in mynd that all disguisements and counterfeate pollicies of this world shall not then prevayle though for a tyme hir Ennemyes under us may cover from men their malicious.<sup>81</sup>

By speaking of what God would judge at Judgement Day Mary was able to voice her discontent and criticisms without claiming them as her own political ideas. Placing the perceived wrongs at a distance in time separated them from herself making it safer for her to express her opinions. Alternatively, it may be suggested that Mary had a firm belief that God would punish her cousin for her actions on earth. The idea of God's coming judgement was shared between Catholics and Protestants, Mary and Elizabeth, and Mary may have believed that by appealing to the idea she could change Elizabeth's actions. The term 'by way of invocation' suggests that Mary criticised the Elizabethan regime and Elizabeth herself in a prayer which would have made her criticisms more threatening and reveals the depth of Mary's conviction because she was expressing it to God. Elizabeth was rattled by this, which was apparent in her belittling the invocation as 'inventions and atheist dexterities'. Elizabeth demanded that Shrewsbury and Beale 'tell her [Mary] that if that severe censure should take place it would go much more hardy with her than we—whatsoever cause she has given us to the contrary—can in Christian charity wish her'.<sup>82</sup> The idea of Judgement Day was being used by Mary and Elizabeth as a form of political discourse and the threatened punishments each suggested awaited the other was a means to voice grievances. It is difficult to disentangle whether the eschatology and apocalypticism present in this exchange is merely rhetoric or if it reflects genuine belief. Mary and Elizabeth may have appealed to a politicised eschatology and apocalypticism because they

<sup>80</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 53/14 fol. 41r (Decipher of Hieronymo Martelli to the Queen of Scots, 18 November 1584).

<sup>81</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 53/12 fol. 54v (Shrewsbury and Mr. Robert Beale to Elizabeth, 16 April 1583).

<sup>82</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 53/12 fol. 55r (Shrewsbury and Mr. Robert Beale to Elizabeth, 16 April 1583).

knew it was a discourse they shared and had the power to influence actions. Elizabeth showed hesitation surrounding the idea of Judgement Day asking ‘if that severe censure should take place’ which was in contrast to Mary’s certainty that it was approaching. This questions the idea that there was a greater expectation that the End was approaching amongst Protestants compared to Catholics in the early modern period, at least on an individual level. The impact of suffering, imprisonment and a loss of political power may be one reason why English Catholics appear to have a pronounced expectation of God’s Judgement or a greater reliance on it for ideas about justice in this period.

The execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587 for her proposed role in the Babington Plot had a significant impact on Catholic apocalypticism and eschatology and public expression of these beliefs. Robert Carvell, described as the brother to a Captain at Berwick by Edward Wotton, the special ambassador to Scotland, was a trusted bearer of letters between Edward Wotton, Sir John Forster, James VI of Scotland and Sir Francis Walsingham, as well as being one of Walsingham’s informers regarding Scottish affairs. On 6 March 1587 Carvell sent a libel he had found hung on the door of his bedchamber to Walsingham.<sup>83</sup> It read

To Jesabell that Englishe heure [whore]

Receive this Scottishe cheyne

As presagies off her gret malhouer [misfortune]

For murthering of oure queen.<sup>84</sup>

Carvell noted that the ‘Scottishe cheyne’ was a hemp cord ‘tied halter wise’ to the door handle thus probably in the shape of a noose.<sup>85</sup> This was not the only copy, one libel passed from Carvell to Sir Robert Carye to be sent to the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Carey, and then to Sir Henry Widdrington, the knight-marshal of Berwick-upon-Tweed, who eventually sent it to Walsingham.<sup>86</sup> The movement of this libel highlighted who were the main agents of English intervention in Scottish affairs during this time and shows how seriously the libel was taken as

<sup>83</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 52/37 fol. 45r (Edward Wotton to Walsingham, 26 May 1585).

<sup>84</sup> London, British Library, Cotton Caligula C/IX, fol. 226r (Robert Carvall to Walsingham, 6 March 1587).

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 59/25, fol. 45r (Woodryngton to Walsingham, March 7 1587).

all of them had to see it for themselves. Carvell claimed that this was just one example of similar slanders being preached and set up daily in Edinburgh against Elizabeth and also James VI and the Master of the Gray, Archibald Douglas.<sup>87</sup> Carvell implied that the notion that Elizabeth was ‘Jesabell that English heire’ was being preached from the pulpit as well as in the open street. The execution of Mary was a turning point and Scottish Catholics laid the blame for the ‘murdering of our queen’ solely on Elizabeth. The act was viewed as especially evil because Mary Queen of Scots was Elizabeth’s cousin, and the fact that Mary was royal and therefore also a monarch chosen by God. For Catholics, Elizabeth had not executed a dissident but God’s anointed, an action that singled her out as extraordinarily evil. The death of Mary appears to have increased the use of eschatological and apocalyptic rhetoric when Elizabeth was described as it was felt that she had revealed herself as the apocalyptic Whore.

This interpretation of Mary’s death was particularly pronounced in Paris and the circles of the Catholic League. The Catholic League was formed as a political and religious opposition to the French Huguenots and closely monitored events in England as England supported the French Protestants.<sup>88</sup> Partly funded by Philip II, supported by the Pope and led by the Duke of Guise the League aimed at the annihilation of Protestantism from France while the Guise family portrayed itself as the defenders of French tradition and corporate privilege.<sup>89</sup> French texts are important for understanding apocalyptic and eschatological views of Elizabeth because English Catholics were not an isolated group but rather closely connected to the continent. Paris was a melting pot for exiles, scholars, gentleman, merchants, Jesuits and seminary priests. Ideas and texts were not geographically confined but rather there was a relationship of exchange between England and France, and the rest of Europe. Ideas travelled through Catholic networks and were brought to different places through people and letters. As Katy Gibbons has observed, ‘in the early 1580s Paris was a key centre for English Catholics’ and ‘the links between Catholics in England and their French counterparts were crucial to the practical and ideological cause of English Catholicism, whilst simultaneously exacerbating

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<sup>87</sup> London, British Library, Cotton Caligula C/VIII, fol. 227r (Robert Carvall to Walsingham, 6 March 1587).

<sup>88</sup> The Guise family founded the League in 1576 as a response to the Treaty of Monsieur which granted Huguenots freedom of worship within a certain distance from Paris. The League made King Henri III politically isolated and in response to this he restricted Huguenots’s rights with the Treaty of Bergerac, ratified as the Edict of Poitiers in 1577, as a concession to the Catholics and declared himself head of the League in order to disband it. The League did not remain dissolved for long and was reorganised following the death of the duke of Anjou in 1584 which passed the right of succession to the French crown to the Protestant Henry of Navarre.

<sup>89</sup> S. Carroll, *Noble Power During the French Wars of Religion: The Guise Affinity and the Catholic Cause in Normandy* (Cambridge, University of Cambridge Press, 1998), p. 251.

religious and political tensions within Paris'.<sup>90</sup> The Parisian press did not suffer the same enforcement of censorship as the English press did during this period. This allowed the publication of provocative Catholic ideas as English Catholics turned increasingly to continental presses and imported works to sustain the Catholic community. French Catholic texts and opinions form a significant backdrop to evaluate English Catholic perceptions during this period and therefore the French characterisation of Elizabeth as the Whore of Babylon is important.

A poem produced by a supporter of the French Catholic League following Mary's execution and collected by Pierre de L'Estoile, a Parisian diarist, notary and royal secretary hostile to the League, was clear that Elizabeth was Jezebel. Addressed 'To The English Jezebel' it claimed that Elizabeth was a

Bastard, incestuous and public bawd,  
Perfidious, disloyal daughter of your sister,  
Which your father discovered her mistake with her,  
Cruel father and husband, he put her to death shamelessly.

From a father so malice, from a mother so lustful,  
Bitch, you take after who you are, and Hell full of horror,  
Placed inside you a serpent in place of a human heart,  
And to direct it, a satanic spirit.

...

As from the cradle there has not been a day  
That against the Christians, you have not vomited some outrage.

Which authority can you use to justify,  
Having gone against all law, made a prisoner and killed  
Her, who, sovereign, excelled your own lineage?<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> K. Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles in Late Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2011), p. 1, p. 13.

<sup>91</sup> Translated: A. S. Wilkinson, *Mary Queen of Scots and French Public Opinion, 1542 – 1600* (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2004), p. 119.

What strikes the reader first is that Elizabeth was explicitly addressed as ‘the English Jezebel’. The themes of sexual depravity and incest were interwoven with the tropes of devilish inspiration and persecution. The line ‘Bitch, you take after who you are, and Hell full of horror’ suggests that the original author viewed Elizabeth as guilty of the same sexual wickedness and cruelty, which would be similar to the characteristics prophesised about the Whore of Babylon. The notion that Elizabeth had been conceived in an act which transgressed moral and natural law drew on belief about Antichrist’s conception from the Middle Ages.<sup>92</sup> Incest was also a charge commonly levelled at witches and heretics to stress their demonic credentials for hundreds of years.<sup>93</sup> Demonic sexual depravity was a popular contemporary topic. The idea that Elizabeth had ‘a serpent in place of a human heart’ and ‘to direct it, a satanic spirit’ draws once again on the tradition of Antichrist. The serpent in Christianity was a powerful symbol as it was the devil in the guise of a serpent who tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit in Genesis 3:3 which traditionally lead to the fall of mankind and original sin. The Apocalypse 12:9 described the old serpent as the devil and in Apocalypse 20:2 the serpent is bound for a thousand years. The language of the poem, beyond its title, was thus also inflected with apocalypticism. Mary’s execution resulted in Elizabeth’s identity as the Whore and her supposed crimes no longer being alluded to but rather supposedly exposed.

The poem collected by Pierre de L’Estoile was not unique and was similar to a poem pinned up around Paris to coincide with the funeral oration for Mary Queen of Scots. *De Jezabelis Angliae Parricidiis ad pois Mariae Scotiae Reginae Manes Carmen* was a single sided broad sheet which title translates as ‘A poem concerning the Parricides of the Jezebel of England’ and it is thought to have been composed by the Scottish author Adam Blackwood who was one of Mary’s most fervent defenders.<sup>94</sup> In another work he described Elizabeth as ‘de Jesabel Angloise’ and a monster, conceived in adultery and incest, her fangs bared for murder, who befouls and despoils the sacred right of scepters, and vomits her choler and gall at heaven.<sup>95</sup> In Blackwood’s text Elizabeth was accused of providing a refuge for thieves and

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<sup>92</sup> Found mostly in vernacular accounts of the Life of Antichrist, Antichrist was proposed to be conceived by the devil and a whore, see: R. K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art and Literature* (Washington, University of Washington Press, 1982), p. 82.

<sup>93</sup> N. Cohn, *Europe’s Inner Demons*, rev. edn. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 75 – 8.

<sup>94</sup> J. Emerson Phillips, *Images of a Queen: Mary Stuart in Sixteenth Century Literature* (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1964), p. 162.

<sup>95</sup> A. Blackwood, *Martyre de la Royne d’Escosse* (Edinburgh [Paris], 1587), sig. RR.ii.r.

conspirators and creating ‘leur refuge est tay putain de Babylonne’.<sup>96</sup> In a report attached to the text entitled ‘The Last Words of the Queen of Scotland, Dowager of France’ it was claimed that following pious prayers and thanks to God, Elizabeth was termed a wolf, a bitch and a hostess of Antichrist.<sup>97</sup> These were not the words uttered publicly by Mary and thus Blackwood used the character of Mary to voice his own opinions and concerns. The use of the eschatological and apocalyptic character of Jezebel may have reflected his genuine beliefs or it could have been because this was the strongest language available to him. The term ‘de Jesabel Angloise’ conveyed a host of ideas about sexual impropriety, monstrous conception, being a religious nemesis and damned by God and Jezebel was a figure, with these associations, immediately recognisable to his contemporary audience.

The identification of Elizabeth as Jezebel called for, at the minimum, no alliance or trading and preferably war as a Christian duty. This was the thrust of Blackwood’s activities as he aimed to stir his audience to put popular pressure on the French King to avenge Mary. Blackwood warned that if Henri failed to act France’s reputation would be further dishonoured as others would take up the task of retribution for Mary’s death.<sup>98</sup> The use of the characterisation of Jezebel, as in the memorandum analysed earlier in this chapter, would make Elizabeth completely opposed to other monarchs and beyond redemption and reform denying the validity of excuses based on politics or diplomacy before they were made. Paris was a cosmopolitan early modern city which included native French men and women, English exiles, Jesuits, merchants, scholars, travellers and ambassadors. Therefore this text and its ideas would not have been geographically limited. The execution of Mary Queen of Scots had a significant impact on the perception of Elizabeth by French Catholics and Scottish Catholics resident in France. These perceptions were often expressed using eschatological and apocalyptic terms, but did not remain restricted to France.

Blackwood’s text certainly fitted with the French literary context and Apocalyptic motifs were prominent in another French text, *Premier et second advertissements des catholiques anglois aux françois catholiques*, printed in 1590. This anonymous work compared

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Qq.ii.r., translated as – their refuge is a whore of Babylon, or alternatively, their refuge is a fucking Babylon, this stresses the intensity of views, my translation.

<sup>97</sup> A. Blackwood, *Martyre de la Roynne d’Escosse* (Edinburgh [Paris], 1587), sig. SS.r., sig. SS.iii.v.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.* sig. SS5.v.

the fate of Catholics in England to those in France while a poem contained at the beginning of the text asked

France, are you astonished if the fury of God,  
Ceaselessly pursues you, and sickens you, and undermines you?  
If war and pale famine,  
As a devouring fire consumes you in every place.<sup>99</sup>

This verse was reminiscent of the Apocalypse. For example, the last horse of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, which represented death, before the opening of the seven seals, was described as a pale horse which kills with the sword and famine and pestilence. To describe 'pale famine' combined with war and sickness becomes less of a linguistic coincidence when it is used alongside descriptions of 'devouring fire'. In Apocalypse 8:5 the angel with the censer casts fire on to the earth and then after the first trumpet, Apocalypse 8:7, hail mixed with fire and blood is cast again onto the earth while later in the text Apocalypse 9:18 foresees a third of mankind killed with fire. The poem continued to be coloured with apocalyptic themes as it claimed

The horribler impiety, which against your judgement,  
Walks in your land with impunity,  
The crime of acquiescing Jezebel your neighbour,  
Who mops Christian blood, is destroying you little by little.<sup>100</sup>

Elizabeth was once again referred to as 'Jezebel', signifying the apocalyptic Whore and we find a reference to Babylon in the following stanza.

You who made a pact with Death who follows you,  
The heresy which makes you pale day and night,  
You are the Babylon mother of all filth.<sup>101</sup>

The Whore of Babylon from the Apocalypse is commonly described as the mother of all filth, having a cup filled with filthiness in Apocalypse 17:4 which would have underscored the

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<sup>99</sup> [Louis d'Orleans], *Premier et second advertissements des catholiques anglois aux françois catholiques* (Lyon, Jean Phillehotte, 1590), sig. A1v.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

identification. What should be noted is that although this poem employs apocalyptic and eschatological motifs it also called for human action. As Alexander Wilkinson argues about the poem, ‘there was nothing especially unorthodox about these sentiments’, it ‘had received an approval from the respected Louvain Doctors of Theology’.<sup>102</sup> Despite prominent apocalyptic and eschatological language, the apocalypse itself is not explicitly mentioned. This appears to be a common theme amongst Catholic works. Brandon Huntley, in his study of Catholic polemic in Lyon during the French Wars of Religion, has assessed that while apocalyptic references were present in Catholic polemic, they appeared to be only a minor theme and has questioned that if apocalyptic works sold reasonably well in other genres, why did religious polemicists avoid this theme?<sup>103</sup> However the theme is not avoided in religious texts. Potentially, the evocative language was to lead one to apocalyptic conclusions but leave the possibility for human action. Overtly to claim the imminence of the apocalypse would abandon the situation up to God’s judgement. The author of *Premier et second advertissements* made it clear that toleration and inaction were a crime. The aim of inspiring pressure to act against Elizabeth may have been the reason that eschatological and apocalyptic language was used but the apocalypse was not predicted.

### **William Allen**

Similarly, Allen’s dedication to reconverting England to Catholicism resulted in a passionate and overtly hostile text which used eschatological language but avoided any apocalyptic predictions. William Allen’s 1588 *Admonition to the English Nobility* was composed in both the contexts of a Bull of Excommunication and the death of Mary Queen of Scots. This text is particularly important because Allen was not hindered by concerns of future diplomacy or gaining toleration and was thus much freer in expressing himself. Allen was instrumental in spreading Pope Sixtus V’s sentence and deposition of Elizabeth and the *Admonition* should be considered part of the same enterprise. The Bull placed itself in the context of the two previous Bulls which had excommunicated Elizabeth and thus the language of *Regnans in excelsis* provided a significant background.<sup>104</sup> The 1588 Bull, probably compiled in English by Allen,

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<sup>102</sup> A. S. Wilkinson, *Mary Queen of Scots and French Public Opinion, 1542 – 1600* (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2004), p. 114.

<sup>103</sup> B. Hartley, ‘War and Tolerance: Catholic Polemic in Lyon During the French Religious Wars’, PhD Thesis Submitted 2007, University of Arizona, p. 170.

<sup>104</sup> Sixtus V, *A declaration of the sentence and deposition of Elizabeth, the usurper and pretended quene of Englande* (Antwerp, A. Coninx, 1588).



was issued in response to the execution of Mary in 1587 which had brought the previous decades of tension between the Catholic powers and England to boiling point. Pope Sixtus's crusade coincided with Spanish interests and in 1588 the Spanish Armada headed by the Duke of Parma set sail to depose and chastise Elizabeth and her followers and return England to the Catholic faith.<sup>105</sup> Allen's *Admonition to the English Nobility* was conceived of as the textual arm of the mission and designed to encourage English Catholics to open rebellion and to join with the Spanish forces. There were close ties between Sixtus's *Declaration* and the *Admonition* as Allen worked on both texts and both texts came off of the same printing press in quick succession. Allen was unambiguous on the title page that he was writing with the authority of the Catholic Church as he described himself as 'the Cardinal of England'.<sup>106</sup> Allen underscored his authority and the Church's support of his arguments when he explained within the text that he was to be the Pope's legate with England.<sup>107</sup> That the arguments Allen made in the *Admonition* had the authority of the Catholic Church is noteworthy because of the language Allen employed.

Allen's *Admonition* publicly described Elizabeth as Jezebel and suggested that she was the Whore of Babylon in English and aimed at an English audience. Allen proclaimed that

Censures and Sentences, have bene by supreme authority of Christs vicar, given up to Invasio[n], warres, wastes, and final distruction, and we nowe mighte by way of rigor and extreame Justice, be bothe charged & chastised far more deeply then the Churche of Theatira for tolerating the wicked Jesabell.<sup>108</sup>

Allen directed his readers to Apocalypse 2 in the margin and therefore made it explicit that he was drawing parallels between the apocalyptic church of Thyatira and the Catholic Church in England. This further related Elizabeth to the apocalyptic Jezebel. In Apocalypse 2:18-29 John was instructed to write to Thyatira and inform them that God knew of their patience but he held against them that they tolerated Jezebel and her false doctrine. After detailing how Jezebel and those who commit adultery with her shall be punished John warned the faithful to holdfast until

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<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> W. Allen, *An admonition to the nobility and people of England and Ireland concerninge the present warres made for the execution of his Holines sentence, by the highe and mightie Kinge Catholike of Spaine. By the Cardinal of Englande* (Antwerp, A. Coninncx, 1588), title page.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, fol. .LIr.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, fol. Vr.

the Second Coming when they shall be given the power to rule over all nations. The purpose and intended audience of this text suggests that Allen used language and ideas which he believed would have wide appeal amongst early modern English Catholics as he needed to win their support. Allen also appealed to Protestants who he considered could be won over to the Catholic cause which supports the contention made throughout this thesis that eschatology was a shared dialogue and worldview in early modern England. This is notable because in the *Admonition* eschatology was used to encourage direct action and rebellion. Allen and his language were no longer shackled by the argument that priests entered England only for religious purposes and did not meddle in political affairs nor was he constrained by arguments for toleration. Allen did not view the continuation of the Elizabethan regime as a viable option for the political future. This was significant because it may have allowed ideas which could have been deliberately masked to rise to the surface.

With fewer political restraints Allen repeatedly referred to Elizabeth as Jezebel which implied that he identified her as the apocalyptic Whore of Babylon. Allen claimed that

This Jesabell for sacrilege, co[n]tempte of holie preistes, rebellion against God & crueltie, dothe so muche resemble our Elizabethe, that in moste forrein cuntries and writings of stra[n]gers she is comonly called by the name of Jesabell. I know not whether God have appointed her the like, or a better ende.<sup>109</sup>

Allen's reference to a 'like, or a better end' may suggest that Allen was referring to the Old Testament Jezebel. This would not remove the apocalyptic associations as in medieval tradition the Old Testament Queen was conflated with the New Testament's Whore of Babylon. The Jezebel of the Book of Kings was considered typological of the Whore of the Apocalypse. Furthermore, Allen argued that, rather than a bad monarch such as the Old Testament Jezebel, Elisabeth was demonically inspired and monstrous, more like the New Testament Whore. Allen alleged that Elizabeth

usurpeth by Luciferian pride, the title of supreme Ecclesiasticall government, a thinge in a woman, in all mens memory unheard of, nor tolerable to the masters of her owne secte, and to Catholikes in the world

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<sup>109</sup> W. Allen, *An admonition to the nobility and people of England and Ireland concerninge the present warres made for the execution of his Holines sentence*, p. XXXIII.

most ridiculous, absurd, monstrous, detestable, and a verie fable to the posterite.<sup>110</sup>

The idea that Elizabeth was motivated by her ‘Luciferian pride’ suggested that Elizabeth was inspired by Satan to place herself as head of the Church of England. Elizabeth’s supposed monstrosity was underscored by Allen’s description of her and her assumed religious role as ‘monstrous, detestable’. If Elizabeth was Jezebel, or a new Jezebel, this meant that Elizabeth’s destruction was both fated and necessary. Allen used eschatology to justify the removal and murder of a monarch.

Allen attacked Elizabeth’s conception and sexuality and thereby reinforced the argument that Elizabeth was the Whore of the Apocalypse. Similar to the French poems previously considered in this chapter, Allen claimed that Elizabeth was ‘taken and knowen for an incestuous bastard, begotten and borne in sinne, of an infamous courtesan Anne Bullen, afterwards executed for adoutery, treason, heresie and incest, amongst others with her owne natural brother’.<sup>111</sup> Elizabeth’s lineage was significant because of the focus on origins which had emerged in the parallel Antichrist tradition. Allen linked his arguments about Elizabeth to Antichrist when he described Elizabeth’s position in the Church of England as ‘her Antechristian, and unnatural proude challenge of supremacy’.<sup>112</sup> Unnatural suggested monstrous, which in turn suggested demonically inspired. Allen’s claim that Elizabeth was a bastard was important and potentially made to encourage Protestants to join the Catholic cause. On a practical level bastardy would have prohibited Elizabeth’s inheritance of the throne and thus she would never have been the rightful queen of England. The bastardy argument would bypass the Bulls of Excommunication and therefore appeal to people who did not invest the Pope with authority.

Following Allen’s earlier discussion of Jezebel and the apocalyptic Church within the *Admonition*, Allen cemented the alleged resemblance between Elizabeth and the Whore through discussion of Elizabeth’s rumoured sexual licentiousness. Allen charged that ‘With the

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<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, p. XI.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, p. XI

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*, p. XIII.

forsaid person [Earle of Essex] and divers others she has abused her bodie, against Gods lawes'.<sup>113</sup> Allen claimed that

neyther were it to chaste eares to be uttered how shamefully she hath defiled and infamed her person and cuntry, and made her Courte as a trappe, by this damnable and destable arte, to inta[n]gle in sinne and overthrowe the younger sorte of the nobilitye and gentlemen of the lande, whereby she has become notorious to the worlde.<sup>114</sup>

Allen's description is similar to the description of the Whore of the Apocalypse and is reminiscent of the language of the memorandum discussed above. The world-wide notoriety to which Allen claimed Elizabeth was subject would imply that she was not just a lustful ruler but was something worse and more dangerous. Allen brought up the failure of the previous marriage matches and used it as a weapon to criticise Elizabeth. Allen argued that 'she could never be restrained from this incontinence though the principall peers of the realm... made humble sute and supplication to her... [to] marrie' because marriage would be a 'a bridle of her licentiousnes'.<sup>115</sup> Unlike previous criticisms of government policy which sought to move blame from Elizabeth and place it on advisors or key figures such as Cecil, Allen's admonition reversed this and sought to lay the blame solely on Elizabeth. She, according to Allen, had acted against the advice of the peers of the realm. This may be because Allen needed to use the 'principall peers' in a transitional government of England if the invasion was to succeed and thus did not want to alienate any potential allies. This reveals who Allen thought would read his *Admonition* and it is notable that Allen used such language when he expected that those with links to the regime would read it. This may suggest Catholic confidence that the Armada would triumph and consequently that there would be no retribution upon ordinary Catholics. Or it may indicate an abandonment of hope and the idea that the situation could not get any worse and that there was nothing to be lost. Either way it is evident that Allen publicly described Elizabeth in terms reminiscent of the Whore of the Apocalypse in order to encourage her subjects to rebel against her and join with forces tasked to dispose her.

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<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. XIX.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> W. Allen, *An admonition to the nobility and people of England and Ireland concerninge the present warres made for the execution of his Holines sentence*, sig. B2r – B2v.

## **Conclusion**

The fact that allegations were being made against individuals that they had called Elizabeth Jezebel suggests that the idea that Elizabeth could be termed Jezebel was credible. The allegations suggest that disobedience to the monarch may have been expressed eschatologically. The Bull of Excommunication and its language provided papal authority for identifications of Elizabeth as the Whore and permitted Elizabeth to be discussed in such terms by political and religious leaders. Nevertheless, there were multiple Catholic interpretation of the Bull available and not everyone construed it apocalyptically or eschatologically. The language of the Bull was sufficiently vague if one needed room for political manoeuvre. The excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570 had a significant impact on apocalyptic and eschatological views of her. A memorandum in the Vatican archives, which was issued in the autumn of 1570 from Brussels in the wake of the excommunication, was explicit that Elizabeth was the Whore of the Apocalypse. Elizabeth was described apocalyptically and presented as typological of the Whore of Babylon while the criticisms aimed at Catholic monarchs were expressed in eschatological terms which would have emphasised the need for swift action. It also placed contemporary events in the timeline of the Book of the Apocalypse which strengthened the notion that Elizabeth was the Whore described in the prophecy. The eschatological outlook of Pope Pius V, Pope Gregory XIII and key religious figures provides an important backdrop for apocalyptic descriptions of Elizabeth. The language employed by the leaders of the Catholic Church was significant because eschatology was a language of political action.

Elizabeth's execution of Mary was felt by Catholics to have confirmed Elizabeth's identity as the apocalyptic Whore. This resulted in an increased public use of eschatological and apocalyptic rhetoric when Elizabeth was described. This interpretation of Mary's death was particularly pronounced in Paris and the circles of the Catholic League. However this does not mean that the ideas were geographically isolated because Paris was an important centre for trade and exiles. Elizabeth was presented as Jezebel in order to create pressure on the French monarchy to act against Elizabeth. This may explain why in the French texts analysed in this chapter eschatological and apocalyptic language was used but the apocalypse was not predicted as the apocalypse would leave it to God to administer justice. In response to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots and as the textual arm of the Spanish Armada William Allen's

*Admonition to the English Nobility* was written and published. Allen was not restrained by considerations of a political future which included Elizabeth and thus this text may present ideas which Allen would have otherwise only expressed in private. That Allen made clear that he argued in the *Admonition* with the support and authority of the Catholic Church is noteworthy because of the language Allen employed. Allen's *Admonition* publically and repeatedly described Elizabeth as Jezebel and suggested that she was the Whore of Babylon in English and aimed at an English audience in order to encourage her subjects to rebellion. The consequence of Elizabeth being Jezebel, or a new Jezebel, was that Elizabeth's annihilation was both essential and predetermined. Allen used eschatology to warrant the deposition and murder of a monarch. The next two chapters will consider how the Catholic eschatological thought presented in this thesis translated into action, either conspiracy to kill the queen or the militant passivity of martyrdom.

## **5: Prophecy, Plots and Eschatology**

The ideas that the Protestant Church was the eschatological False Church and that Elizabeth I was the Whore of Babylon demanded human action. This chapter will analyse how prophecy encouraged direct action against the Elizabethan regime and destabilised Elizabeth's rule. Prophecy, although used by the regime, remained a shared language and one which also gave power to the disempowered. Catholic plots in this period often had a prophetic connection and plotters regularly had prophecies in their possession. Prophecy provided a space for Catholics to engage politically with the regime and challenge it. However, the records fall almost silent and Catholic eschatological prophecy appears to be scarce. This chapter will interrogate why this silence exists and how such a problematic subject as early modern Catholic prophecy can provide meaningful insights. This chapter will consider current historiography of early modern prophecy and individual prophets and ask why early modern Catholic prophecy and its role in conspiracy has so far been overlooked in historiography. Catholic prophecies will then be placed back into the context of the political action which they encouraged. This chapter will analyse an eschatological and prophetic Catholic book of miscellanies and discuss the role of prophecy in the Babington Conspiracy.

### **Silence**

Early modern English Catholic prophecy is a suggestive topic but one about which there is a significant amount of silence in the records. It is in the nature of studying an underground group that sources were often destroyed. The manuscripts and books themselves were dangerous, not just the ideas which they contained. To be caught with Catholic books and manuscripts was to open oneself and one's family up to allegations of treason. As Gerard Kilroy argues, 'Never have books, or writing or letters been as dangerous as they were between 1581 and 1606: proclamation after proclamation forbade seditious writings; books were seized in midnight raids, and men were questioned for copying poems'.<sup>1</sup> Letters were often designed so that their contents would be destroyed if they were intercepted. John Gerard recorded in his memoirs how he wrote in orange juice rather than lemon juice because a letter written in lemon juice would show its contents when it came in to contact with water whereas water would wash away

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<sup>1</sup> G. Kilroy, *Edmund Campion: Memory and Transcription* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005), p. 1.

the words of a letter written in orange juice.<sup>2</sup> As well as deliberate destruction the sources were also vulnerable to accidental destruction. Gerard related another incident where a gentleman had burnt his orange juice letter without reading it because he didn't understand that it contained a secret message.<sup>3</sup>

Hostile Protestant sources are problematic but can help to shine a light on what the Catholic primary sources suggest may have been happening. For example, claims that Catholic priests uttered eschatological warnings or curses of God's wrath at their executions only appear in Protestant accounts. It was maintained in 1583 that '[Thomas ] Cottom an Englishe Jesuite being condemned to die and seeing a great multitude of people round about him... broke out into many bitter curses and prayed god that his words send down from heaven and consume them all'.<sup>4</sup> As we will see in the chapter concerning Catholic martyrdom, Thomas Cottam was comforted in the days preceding his execution by the notion of a coming Judgement Day and retribution.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in a hostile account of the execution of the Babington plotters by George Whetstone it was claimed that 'Throgmorton the traitor' had said 'before one yeare were expired the properitie & peace of England should be tourned into general calamitie'.<sup>6</sup> The same text asserted that from the gallows in 1586 Edward Abingdon made 'a speech, that there could not choose but be a great effution of blood in England very shortly'.<sup>7</sup> As we shall see later in this chapter, prophecy and eschatology were features of the Babington plot.<sup>8</sup> The fact that these insights are included in Protestant rather than Catholic accounts may be because they would challenge the status of the executed person. The standard Catholic narrative presented priests praying for their persecutors and the monarch. Eschatological pronouncements and threatening of God's judgement did not fit with the construction of a passive, loyal priest who was wrongfully killed. This in turn poses a problem as Catholic threatening of woe and judgement would have been politically useful to the regime and therefore we must be cautious about the authenticity of these claims. Nevertheless, as we will see in the chapter concerning martyrdom, Catholic priests viewed themselves as eschatological

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<sup>2</sup> J. Gerard, *The Autobiography of a Hunted Priest*, P. Caraman (trans.) (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1988), p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 161 – 162.

<sup>4</sup> London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 982/18, fol. 25r (Of the trials and executions of several Popish priests and traitors in 1582).

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Cottam is discussed in Chapter 6, pp. 231 – 233.

<sup>6</sup> G. Whetstone, *The censure of a loyall subject* (London, 1587), sig. C3r.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> The Babington conspiracy is analysed pp. 190 – 194.



agents.<sup>9</sup> These details may be absent from Catholic sources because a priest threatening God's judgement on their Protestant executors and the regime would have underscored their political militancy. This would contradict Catholic claims that priests died for religion only. Anne Dillon has shown how carefully Catholic martyr narratives were crafted and concluded that 'they were compiled with a common editorial policy in mind'.<sup>10</sup> Thus, eschatology may have been deliberately removed by Catholics from accounts to protect the reputations of their martyrs.

Eschatology and eschatological predictions may also have been removed by the Protestant authorities who were responsible for recording possible conspiracies. Prophecy was taken extremely seriously and the destruction or omission of it may have been an attempt to prevent predictions from circulating further. Whether the prophecy was feared to come true or not the sheer existence of the prophecy could destabilise Elizabeth's reign because of the power people gave to them. As Symon Yomans had answered in 1586 'God will not nor cannot save her, for the profercie dothe speake'.<sup>11</sup> Those recording events and deciding which documents warranted preservation were invested in keeping the regime and Protestantism in power and quashing any challenge to it. If eschatology and prophecy has not been removed from the sources then we must ask why it was not there to begin with. Were early modern English Catholics so unlike other religious controversialists of the age and did the eschatological discourse and references in the printed sources fall on deaf ears? Were early modern English Catholics distinct from their co-religionists on the continent and was there a great disparity between the ideas of the relatively recent Catholic past and those exchanged amongst Catholics of early modern England?

### **Historiography**

The ambiguous and enigmatic language of prophecy has come to the attention of historians as an important way in which early modern people understood and engaged with time and their place within it. Historians have used a variety of tools to try to penetrate the meaning of early

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<sup>9</sup> This argument is made in the chapter 6, pp. 196 – 233.

<sup>10</sup> A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535 – 1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), p. 84.

<sup>11</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/192 fol. 80r (Information of Sybill Horte and John Toye against Symon Yomans).

modern prophecy and to assess its importance. Norman Cohn and Christopher Hill have understood prophecy as an expression of class conflict and a language of challenge for the economically disempowered.<sup>12</sup> However in the light of subsequent research it has become clear that society was more vertically divided than horizontally and prophecy had an appeal across the spectrum of rich and poor, powerful and disempowered.<sup>13</sup> Anna French has studied the relationship between age and early modern prophecy as a means of accessing the social understanding of childhood and the community imagination around this group.<sup>14</sup> Research conducted by Diane Watt and Phyllis Mack has explored how prophecy intersected with gender and has shown how prophecy can help us to access the voices of those people whose stories can remain untold in history.<sup>15</sup> However, Catholics appear not to have attracted the attention of historians. For example, Dianne Watt's study into female prophets in late medieval and early modern England moves directly from 'Anne Askew and Foxe's Godly Women' to 'Eleanor Davies [the] Civil War Prophet'.<sup>16</sup> Tim Thornton focuses on the Protestant interpretation of biblical apocalyptic prophecies and the juncture of this understanding with the prophecies attributed to Merlin and Mother Shipton.<sup>17</sup> Thornton excludes Catholics from his analysis. In A. Wade Razzi's summary of medieval and early modern apocalypticism Catholics only appear in the discussion of the Protestant notion of the Pope as Antichrist.<sup>18</sup> Kevin Sharpe appears to subsume Catholics and Protestants into a monolithic 'English' understanding of the Armada.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Aviuh Zakai's research on the topic pushes Catholics to the periphery as he identifies the beginning of the relationship between history and apocalyptic prophecy with the ascendancy of Protestantism.<sup>20</sup> Zakai's study dismisses any possibility that Catholic tradition

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<sup>12</sup> N. Cohn, *The Pursuit Of The Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London, Random House, 2004), C. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London, Penguin, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> T. Thornton, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> A. French, *Children of Wrath: Possession, Prophecy and the Young in Early Modern England* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> D. Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2001), P. Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, University of California Press, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> D. Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell & Brewer, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> T. Thornton, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2006), pp. 55 – 56.

<sup>18</sup> A. Wade Razzi 'In Pursuit of the Millenia: Robert Crowley's Changing Concept of Apocalypticism' in: A. Brady & E. Butterworth (eds.), *The Use of the Future in Early Modern Europe* (London, Routledge, 2010), pp. 21 – 22.

<sup>19</sup> K. Sharpe, 'Reading revelations: prophecy, hermeneutics and politics in early modern Britain' in: K. Sharpe & S. N. Zwicker (eds.), *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 129.

<sup>20</sup> A. Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 20.

had any influence and represents Protestantism as the genesis of the early modern notion of a relationship between history and apocalyptic prophecy.<sup>21</sup> This not only misses but denies the existence of a parallel Catholic understanding and the influence this may have had on Protestant thought. There is thus a significant gap in historiographical research on the topic of early modern English Catholic prophecy.

When early modern Catholic prophecy is addressed in the historiography early modern Catholics are generally presented as having appropriated Protestant prophecy rather than having developed their own. The same prophecy could indeed be interpreted in a variety of ways. As Ottavia Niccoli has assessed, 'Present concerns invaded a text (that was usually deliberately ambiguous), overwhelmed it, and constrained the reader to a noticeably distorted reading of what it contained'.<sup>22</sup> Yet Alison Shell has argued that 'the idea of a specifically Catholic prophecy is hard to sustain'.<sup>23</sup> The book of miscellanies which this chapter will consider is in tension with this perception. It is different and clearly Catholic and this difference may be because Catholic prophecies had different aims to contemporary Protestant ones. Even though many prophecies could be read and interpreted by both Catholic and Protestants, there were some prophecies which had a clearly Catholic audience and appeal. Context could easily change the meaning of words and phrases. Prophecy allows us to study the ideas that would normally remain hidden. Our understanding of early modern prophecy is enhanced when it is relocated in the eschatological worldview of which it was a feature. Prophecy was a religious understanding of time as divinely planned and which has been, in the case of the Apocalypse, or will be, in the case of individual prophets, revealed. However, the divine plan needed human agents and as such prophecy expressed an individual and collective wish and imagined a future which can and will be changed. This chapter aims to shed new light on politically charged prophecies circulating among Catholics and also on the motivations for plotting.

The historiography of plots is ultimately concerned with the relationship between Catholicism and the Crown in early modern England. This has resulted in three broad trends in

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> O. Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, Cochrane L. G. (trans) (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> A. Shell, *Oral Culture and Catholicism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 65.

historiography. Firstly the role of prophecy in conspiracy can be understated in an attempt to shake off the label of ‘superstitious’ from early modern Catholicism.<sup>24</sup> In pursuing a narrative which promotes the idea of general early modern Catholic loyalism, some historiography has placed greater emphasis on the foreign connection in plots or on the individuals involved.<sup>25</sup> There has been a separate strand of argument which has claimed that early modern English Catholicism in general did not pose a threat and that the wider English Catholic community was scapegoated and persecuted as a result of the actions of a few individuals.<sup>26</sup> Also, the question is posed that in some cases, such as the Ridolphi plot, these conspiracies were manufactured by Walsingham or Burghley in order to justify killing Mary Queen of Scots.<sup>27</sup> This approach can minimise the prophetic and Catholic strands from the conspiracies and removes the Pope, and individual Catholics, from blame. Alternatively, historiographical thinking which has promoted an account of Elizabeth’s reign as a triumph of Protestantism has played down the danger and number of plots in order to emphasise the glory of the Elizabethan period.<sup>28</sup> The conspiracies have been dismissed as the result of a few discontented individuals and an aberration in Elizabeth’s general popularity. Another strand of this historiographical thought describes the realistic danger posed to Elizabeth by the combination of Catholicism and the Succession crisis.<sup>29</sup> The removal of prophecy and concentration on the practicalities of the conspiracy may be a way to emphasise how close the threat came to being realised. Lastly, Catholic conspiracies have been studied to provide a broader picture of Elizabeth’s reign as unstable and not a triumph of Protestantism.<sup>30</sup> Catholic plots have been used to question the

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<sup>24</sup> This has been a general trend since the Reformation but has come to the fore again in response to the publication of K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>25</sup> J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570 – 1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976), J. Bossy, ‘The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism’, in: T. Aston (ed.), *Crisis in Europe 1560-1660: Essays from Past and Present* (Routledge, London 1965), pp. 223 – 46, J. Bossy, *Under the Molehill: An Elizabethan Spy Story* (London, Yale University Press, 2001), p. 150, Victor Houlston has argued that Catholic resistance was inspired by the Jesuit mission of 1580 – 81 and that even Robert Persons outlook changed with the execution of Campion, see V. Houlston, *Catholic Resistance in Elizabethan England: Robert Persons’s Jesuit Polemic, 1580 – 1610* (Aldershot, Ashgate 2007), p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> J. Gibney, *Ireland and the Popish Plot* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> J. Childs, *God’s Traitors: Terror and Faith in Elizabethan England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 34 – 35.

<sup>28</sup> A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, Collins, 1964), Wallace MacCaffrey has emphasised the ‘thirty years of internal and external peace’ of Elizabeth’s reign and does not mention Spanish involvement in various assassination attempts, see: W. T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588 – 1603* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 4 and ‘introduction’.

<sup>29</sup> C. Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 80 – 81.

<sup>30</sup> P. Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2016).

regime's propaganda and where power was concentrated. These studies have had to strike a balance between the Catholic connection and an individual's desires.

Despite the role of prophecy in plotting and individual plotters' motivation, prophecy often appears as a side issue in historical accounts of the various Catholic conspiracies against Elizabeth and the regime. This may be because the many plots against Elizabeth are often considered separately in the historiography of the Elizabethan period. For example, Susan Doran's account of the reign of Elizabeth analyses the different conspiracies in separate sections of her work.<sup>31</sup> More widely in the historiography, if the schemes are considered together the focus is on Mary Queen of Scots as the linchpin in Catholic designs for regime change.<sup>32</sup> Historical analysis of the regime's reaction to plots has meant that prophecy has become an after-thought. Christopher Haigh has summarised the various plots against Elizabeth but does not mention prophecy as his study focused on Elizabeth's response of propaganda and publicity.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Peter Lake's study is concerned with the regime's response to plots and rumours of plots and how this can help to illuminate our understanding of the mechanisms of Elizabethan power and explore the concept of a monarchical republic.<sup>34</sup> Otherwise, plots have been approached through the examination of one family's fortunes such as Jessie Childs's analysis of the role of the Vauxes of Harrowden Hall in conspiracies across Elizabeth's reign.<sup>35</sup> The depth and breadth of this study has made prophecy, although a recurring theme, a minor strand of analysis. The lack of explicit attention in historiography to the role of prophecy in Catholic conspiracies during Elizabeth's reign is surprising. As Jennifer Forster has pointed out, the 'participants in every major rebellion of the Tudor period claimed to be acting on the authority of a political prophecy'.<sup>36</sup> Challenges to power in the form of political prophecy have been widely studied in the context of the Middle Ages and the reign of Henry VIII.<sup>37</sup> Yet, Elizabethan Catholic political prophecy is only analysed at length in terms

<sup>31</sup> S. Doran, *Elizabeth I and Her Circle* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>32</sup> J. D. Staines, *The Tragic History of Mary Queen of Scots, 1560 – 1690 : Rhetoric, Passions, and Political Literature* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009), pp. 87 – 88, C. Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 86 – 99, A. Fletcher & D. MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions, Fifth Edition* (Harlow, Pearson Education, 2004), pp. 102 – 103.

<sup>33</sup> C. Haigh, 'The Queen and her People' in: C. Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (Routledge, London 2013), pp. 177 – 202.

<sup>34</sup> P. Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2016).

<sup>35</sup> J. Childs, *God's Traitors: Terror & Faith in Elizabethan England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>36</sup> J. Forster, 'Anticipating the apocalypse: an Elizabethan prophecy', *The Historian*, [Albuquerque, NM etc.], vol. 63, no.3 (2001), p. 612.

<sup>37</sup> L. A. Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2000), S. M. Schwartz, *The prophecies of Merlin and medieval political propaganda in England from Geoffrey of Monmouth*

of Shakespearean references and plot in the form of the structure of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>38</sup> By considering the common prophetic element in Catholic plots this chapter will restore the eschatological dimension to Catholic conspiracies in Elizabeth's reign.

There were multiple strands and traditions of prophecy circulating in the Elizabethan period: Galfridian type prophecy, individual seers, apocalyptic predictions, and prophecies of a Golden Age. These coexisted, fused and intermingled, as people of all religious convictions speculated on the future. Galfridian type prophecy used animal symbols which drew on heraldic links to allude to the roles of individuals, families and countries in speculated change.<sup>39</sup> These prophecies imbued families and regimes with a sense of 'providential inevitability' but, if interpreted by the regime's enemies, could foster an idea of inevitable downfall.<sup>40</sup> As Tim Thornton has argued 'prophecy represented a powerful political, religious, and social language that was never under complete elite control, and yet which could never be completely ignored by the elite'.<sup>41</sup> Individual seers cast horoscopes, interpreted dreams or claimed that God communicated directly with them. The astrologer and alchemist John Dee was repeatedly consulted by Queen Elizabeth herself whereas at the other end of the spectrum and at the margins of society Simon Forman built up a reputation for astrological learning and considered dreams to be vehicles for prophetic visions.<sup>42</sup> As well as supposed communication from God individual religious excitement could grow to such an extent that occasionally it was claimed that God had returned. For example, in September 1591 near Cheapside the illiterate maltmaker William Hacket was declared by Edmund Coppinger and Henry Arthington to be Jesus Christ. They proceeded to claim that he had come to judge the world and warned the crowds of

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to Henry VII (Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1977), S. L. Jansen, *Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1991), G. R. Elton, *Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), Chp. 2, E. Shagan, 'Rumours and Popular Politics in the Reign of Henry VIII', in: T. Harris (ed.), *The Politics of the Excluded, C. 1500 – 1850* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 41 – 43.

<sup>38</sup> D. Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London, Routledge, 1996), pp. 191 – 192.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion of Galfridian prophecy see: K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular belief in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (London, Penguin Books, 1991), p. 462, p. 466; A. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 175.

<sup>40</sup> H. Dobin, *Merlin's Disciples: Prophecy, Poetry, and Power in Renaissance England* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 134.

<sup>41</sup> T. Thornton, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2006), p. 194.

<sup>42</sup> The relationship between Dee and the regime has been the subject of an in-depth study by Glynn Parry, see: G. Parry, *The Arch Conjuror of England: John Dee* (London, Yale University Press, 2011), L. Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman: Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005).

impending massacres if they did not repent.<sup>43</sup> News of the incident spread and Robert Southwell complained from London in December 1591 to Richard Verstegan that ‘There is no evil publikely done but streyt they father it on Papists’ and that ‘Hacket (a most blasphemous man calling him self greater than God...), when they saw his blasphemies so great ... they streyt gave it out that he was a Papist’.<sup>44</sup> The case of Hacket was used by the authorities to embarrass both the puritan and Catholic religious factions in England. Prophecy, particularly when it was proved untrue, could be a useful political weapon against one’s enemies.

Prophecy was contested and multiple interpretations of the same prophetic themes co-existed. A significant strand of Elizabethan prophetic speculation was that surrounding the dawning of a ‘golden age’ or ‘golden day’ which was evocative of a millennial hope. These prophecies were an eclectic fusion of traditions from the Apocalypse and the idea of a New Jerusalem to Virgil’s fourth eclogue in the third century.<sup>45</sup> The ‘golden day’ prophecies looked forward to a restoration of previously lost purity. Bernard McGinn has assessed that between 1475 – 1520 millennialism flourished, especially south of the Alps and Pyrenees. McGinn has argued that the ‘Renaissance fascination with the classical myth of the returning ‘Golden Age’ (aetas aurea) combined with a broad, if vague, millennial wave of Joachite origin to encourage many forms of hope for a final and better time before the End’.<sup>46</sup> With English Catholicism’s strong link to the continent and the movement of Catholic priests could it be that there was a movement of prophecies? Nevertheless, early modern English Catholics have so far not been investigated. Jessica L. Malay has considered Sybline imagery and prophecies of a ‘golden age’ which were applied by Protestants to Elizabeth and how prophecy was used as praise.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> R. Cosin, *Conspiracie, for pretended reformation viz. presbyteriall discipline. A treatise discovering the late designments and courses held for aduancement thereof, by William Hacket yeoman, Edmund Coppinger, and Henry Arthington Gent. out of others depositions and their owne letters, writings & confessions vpon examination: together with some part of the life and conditions, and two inditements, arraignment, and execution of the sayd Hacket: also an answere to the calumniations of such as affirme they were mad men: and a resemblance of this action vnto the like, happened heretofore in Germanie. Vltimo Septembris. 1591.* (London, 1592), pp. 55 – 57. The Case of William Hacket has been analysed by Alexandra Walsham, see: A. Walsham, ‘Frantick Hacket’: Prophecy, Sorcery, Insanity, and the Elizabethan Puritan Movement’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), pp. 27 – 66.

<sup>44</sup> A. G. Petti (ed.), *The Letters and Despatches of Richard Verstegan: 1550 – 1640*, CRS, Vol. LII (London, R. H. Johns, 1959), p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> D. Scott Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 71 – 72.

<sup>46</sup> B. McGinn, ‘Wrestling with the Millenium: Early Modern Catholic Exegesis of Apocalypse 20’, in: A. Amanat and M. Bernhardsson, *Imagining the End: Visions of Apocalypse from the Ancient Middle East to Modern America* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2002), p. 153.

<sup>47</sup> J. L. Malay, ‘The Sibyls in Elizabeth’s Court and Country’ in J. L. Malay, *Prophecy and Sibylline Imagery in the Renaissance: Shakespeare’s Sibyls* (London, Routledge, 2010), pp. 54 – 77.

Similarly, Vaughan Hart has analysed how poets would cast Elizabeth as Astraea to promote stability in her reign with the image that Elizabeth would usher in a golden age.<sup>48</sup> Historians have considered how Elizabeth was considered a new Constantine or projected as a possible Last World Emperor but have not discussed the possibility of a competing English Catholic understanding. This chapter will present evidence which suggests that we need a closer investigation of early modern English Catholic prophecies of a ‘golden age’ and their impact on political action.

### **Prophecy and Catholic Conspiracies**

Political prophecy had a long history in England, coming into the foreground in the twelfth century with Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Prophetiae Merlini* and *History of the Kings of Britain*. Prophecy expressed deeply held beliefs about the relationship between God, time and man, and by 1558 had become a widespread way of criticising political regimes and expressing a desire for change. William Fulke emphasised the power of prophecy in Elizabethan England when he lamented that ‘thys Nostradamus reigned here so lyke a tyrant wyth hys sooth saynges, that without the good lucke of hys prophesies it was thought that nothing could be brought to effecte’.<sup>49</sup> Prophecy and almanacs were part of a shared culture between Protestants and Catholics as Edward Topsell observed in 1599 that

Many of the learned sort are much affected with the prophesies of the *Sibilles*, *Methodius* and others; many of the popish sort are continually contemplatours of the oracles of *Briget*, and other papistical and monastical dreames; but above all the simple and vulgar people imagine that there is no Scripture like to *Merlins* prophesie.<sup>50</sup>

The appeal of prophecy however was not so clear cut. Protestants and Catholics used the same prophecies with the difference resting in the interpretation rather than the recourse to particular predictions. Elizabeth’s refusal to name a successor or allow discussions of who could succeed her, combined with the actual instability of her reign, fuelled prophetic speculation by creating an unstable political future. As Bart Van Es has emphasised, ‘for the monarch who lacked an

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<sup>48</sup> V. Hart, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts* (London, Routledge, 2002), p. 30.

<sup>49</sup> W. Fulke, *Antiprognostication that is to saye, an invectiue against the vayne and unprofitable predictions of the astrologians as Nostrodame, &c.* (London, 1560), sig. A8r.

<sup>50</sup> E. Topsell, *Times Lamentation: or An exposition on the prophet Joel, in sundry sermons or meditations* (London, Printed by Edm. Bollifant, for George Potter, 1599), p. 63.



heir, prophecy constituted an especially serious threat'.<sup>51</sup> Eschatology increased the threat and potential of political prophecy by sanctioning human action. The Bible taught obedience to the monarch.<sup>52</sup> However this teaching of obedience had a caveat, that in exceptional circumstances, such as if a monarch was deposed by a Papal Bull or if the world was in the End times and the ruler has been identified as the Whore or Antichrist, human opposition, rebellion, and even murder had a divine warrant.

There was certainly much Protestant anxiety that prophecy was circulating amongst Catholics and could stir up rebellion. A Protestant poem by John Phillips published in 1570 asked 'why do Papistes mutter so, In every corner now?'<sup>53</sup> Philips claimed that prophecy of regime change was so common that when Catholics parted one another instead of farewell,

adew saithe one, Unto the Golden day.

When wee shall have our wils,

And purpose come to passe:

Ande eke enjoy as we doo wish,

Our longe desired Masse.<sup>54</sup>

Phillips underscored the apparent danger in the prophecies when he argued that 'For some would bite, which now do bark, To have a Golden daye'.<sup>55</sup> Was there any reality to Phillips's fears or was the poem hyperbole? This chapter will show that Phillips's fears were not unfounded and that the Catholic conspiracies of Elizabeth's reign all shared a connection with prophecy.

Two years after Phillips's warning, the Protestant authorities were concerned that prophecies were circulating amongst a group of Catholics planning regime change located in Rockcliffe, about 34 miles from Carlisle. On 13 June 1572 Humphrey Musgrave, George

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<sup>51</sup> B. Van Es, *Spencer's Forms of History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 172.

<sup>52</sup> Obedience to a monarch: 2 Samuel 1:14–16, Romans 13:1–5, John 19:11, Proverbs 8:15, Daniel 2:21, Daniel 4:17, Psalms 75:6–7, 1 Peter 2:13.

<sup>53</sup> J. Phillips, *A friendly Larum, or faythfull warnynge to the true harted subjects of England, Discoverynge the Ages, and malicious minds of those obstinate and rebellious Papists that hope (as they terme it) to have theyr Golden day* (London, William How, 1570), sig. Avii.r.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.* sig. Avii.v.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.* sig. Bvii.v.

Hudson and Matthew Hewet were examined by Lord Scrope and the Bishop of Carlisle about the movements of Lawrence Banister, Thomas Carleton and William Hutton.<sup>56</sup> On 30 June Lord Scrope and the Bishop of Carlisle wrote to Lord Burghley to reveal that during their search for vestments, copes and ‘other suche concealed thinges’ they had discovered that Carleton, Hutton and Banister had had secret dealings with Lord Herries in Scotland.<sup>57</sup> The connection to Lord Herries was an important one because, despite his Protestantism, Lord Herries was a strong ally of Mary Queen of Scots who held a powerful border position. Also, along with other Scottish Lords, Herries had sheltered suspects who had fled England in the wake of the Northern Rising. Lord Scrope and the Bishop of Carlisle recommended to Lord Burghley that Carleton and Hutton were now in London and should be questioned.<sup>58</sup> By July 1572 the questioning had widened and Thomas Pickering of Threkeld and Edward Elwod of Dunston were examined. Edward Elwod made the interesting claim that he was asked by Banister at Rockliffe castle what the prophecies said of the Duke of Norfolk’s grave.<sup>59</sup> Elwod maintained that he had responded that the hound should chase the white lion to Berwick.<sup>60</sup> The hound was understood by Banister to refer to himself and the white lion was interpreted to represent Leonard Dacre. It was alleged that it was reported to many people that the Duke of Norfolk would ‘styre him selfe and be in this countrie before Bartholomew tide’ and Elwod feared there were ‘abowte some yll practices’.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, the group and thus the Galfridian type prophecies were connected to a conspiracy to kill the queen through Leonard Dacre who, two years earlier, had been described by Elizabeth herself as a ‘cankered subtill traitor’ for his suspected role in the Ridolphi plot.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, it would appear that in the 1570s Catholic conspiracy and prophetic speculation was only just beginning and would not reach a high point until later in the reign.

By the 1580s the Protestant authorities were convinced that there was a relationship between prophecy, Catholicism and conspiracy and the Privy Council’s particular targeting of

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<sup>56</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/21 fol. 158r (Examination of Hum. Musgrave, of Hartley, co. Westmoreland, before Lord Scrope and the Bishop of Carlisle).

<sup>57</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/21 fol. 129r (Henry Lord Scrope and Richard Bishop of Carlisle to Lord Burghley).

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/21 f. 160r (Examination of Thos. Pickering, of Threlkeld).

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 160v.

<sup>62</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/17 fol. 262r (The Queen to Lord Hunsden, 26 February 1570).

words suggests that there was a troubling, if not widespread, connection made between the Jesuit mission and prophecy. In 1581 the Privy Council presented two bills to the House of Lords. One was concerned with rumours and seditious words while the other was aimed at strengthening the treason laws against Catholic missionaries.<sup>63</sup> It may not be a coincidence that these two bills were drafted and debated in tandem. What was to be passed as the ‘Acte against sedicious Wordes and Rumors uttered againste the Queenes moste excellent Majestie’ included a section which made it punishable by death for

any person or persons... [who] by setting or erecting of any Figure or Figures, or by casting of Nativities, or by calculacon, or by any Prophecieng Witchcrafte Conjuracons or other lyke unlawfull Meanes whatsoever, seeke to knowe, and shall set forth by expresse Wordes Deedes or Writinges, howe longe her Ma[jes]t[i]e shall lyve or contynue, or who shall raigne as King or Queene of this Realme of England after her Highnesse Decease, or else shall advisedlye and with a maliciouse intent againste her Highenes, utter any manner of directe Prophecies to any suche Intent or Purpose, or shall malitiouslye by and Wordes Writing or Printing wishe will or desier the Deathe or Deprivacon of our Sovereigne Ladye.<sup>64</sup>

This is significant because legislation expressed government fear about what may be happening. Laws are not passed if there is no perceived need for them. This suggests that there was a problem, or perceived problem, against which to legislate.

Indeed, in 1581 Edward de Vere, the seventeenth earl of Oxford, after a disagreement at court, accused his former friends Henry Howard and Charles Arundel of catholic sympathies, conspiring to remove the Queen and possessing a book of painted prophecies.<sup>65</sup> Painted prophecies told a story through images and heraldic symbolism and had been a popular means of spreading prophetic speculation to the illiterate and literate alike.<sup>66</sup> Painted prophecies were closely aligned with the medieval tradition of emblem books which gained a renewed

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<sup>63</sup> G. R. Elton, *The Parliament of England, 1559-1581* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 186.

<sup>64</sup> 23 Eliz. c.2.

<sup>65</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/151, fol. 97r (A brief answer by Charles Arundel to my Lord of Oxford's slanderous accusations).

<sup>66</sup> Albrecht Durer's woodcut edition of the *Apocalypse* is the most famous of this kind.

popularity in the sixteenth century.<sup>67</sup> As we have seen in the chapter concerning accusations that the Queen was termed Jezebel, what is important about the charge is not necessarily its truth but that it was judged by the accuser to be believable.<sup>68</sup> Charles Arundel described the accusation as slanderous and the various claims of owning prophetic books initiated a bitter war of defamation and allegations.<sup>69</sup> In 1581 Howard drew up articles accusing Oxford of everything from blasphemy to buggery and included a further suggestion that the book of prophecies was to be found in the earl of Oxford's 'great chamber'.<sup>70</sup> Howard was neither the first nor the last to make such allegations about the Earl of Oxford's lifestyle, but what is striking is the detail into which Howard goes and the vehemence of his attack. This may indicate a feeling of betrayal by a former friend and thus suggest that there may have been some truth to Oxford's claim. Alternatively, it may show that Howard was under no illusion about the danger of the accusation of prophetic plotting and was determined to assassinate his accuser's character. The scandal rumbled on and in 1582 in a letter to Walsyngham Howard defended himself and implicated the Earl of Oxford. In this letter Howard provided further details about the supposed book of prophecies and claimed he had no knowledge of 'that book of babies in my lord of oxford his hands'.<sup>71</sup> The extra, unprompted detail Howard provided is telling as it suggests that the painted prophecies were concerned with the succession. It is noteworthy that the possibility that a book of treasonable painted prophecies existed was not in question; rather who had possession of the book was the main focus of investigation.

In the 1580s suspicion was mounting that Catholic plots were being encouraged by prophecies. It was recorded that during Rycharde Lacey's confession on the 13 Marche 1583 'he sayeth that he hearde the papistes say that they looke for a golden day, & when the said day shall come he sayeth that the protestantes shall drinke of the whippe and smerte for this yeare calling them hereticks'.<sup>72</sup> It is not made explicit in the account whether the 'golden day' refers to a rebellion, a restoration of Catholicism or the apocalypse but the combination of a predicted

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<sup>67</sup> M. Bath, *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture* (London, Longman, 1994), H. Diehl, 'Graven Images: Protestant Emblem Books in England', *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Spring, 1986), pp. 49 – 66.

<sup>68</sup> Accusations are discussed in chapter 4, pp. 125 – 129.

<sup>69</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/151 fol. 97r (A brief answer by Charles Arundel to my Lord of Oxford's slanderous accusations).

<sup>70</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/151 fol. 118r – fol.119v, fol.119r (Articles by Lord Henry Howard against the Earl of Oxford, 1581).

<sup>71</sup> Kew, The National Archives, SP 12/155 fol. 84r (Lord Henry Howard to Walsingham, 14 September 1582).

<sup>72</sup> J. H. Pollen (ed.), *Unpublished documents relating to the English martyrs*, Catholic Record Society, Vol. I, 1584 – 1603 (London, J. Whitehead & Son, 1908), p. 73.

‘golden day’ and punishment for acts committed against Catholics is suggestive. Less than a month later, on 10 April 1583, the gentleman John Tusser of Tolleshunt pleaded not guilty to an indictment at the Essex Assize in which it was alleged that he had published a prophecy that predicted the restoration of Catholicism in England. Tusser was supposed to have circulated that

they seke a crosse of stone betwene Gloster and the forest but they shall not find it, then shall they gooe to London and there shall the lyon doe greate harme and distruction and then he shall gooe into Norfolke and the[re] shalbe be slayne of an elyphant. And t[h]en the poore Commynaltie shall take the white horse for their captaine and rejoyce bycause there shall comm into England, one that was dead and with him shall comm the royall E. and the dead man shall sett the crownes of England, on his hedd. And then the lawes shall turne and then the people shall rejoyce the deades mans commynge because sorowe and care shalbe then almost paste. And then shall the ryall E. Whiche is the best bloud borne in all the world shall roote out all heresies cleane out of this relme restoringe the churche and the catholicke faythe. A lyon, a horse, a liberd [leopard] shall crowne E. by the helpe of the great Egle.<sup>73</sup>

If we unpack the symbolic codes the elephant could suggest the Throckmortons playing a leading role as an elephant was a prominent part of the family crest. The lion may represent England, the Unicorn, or white horse, may indicate Scotland and the great eagle may suggest the Catholic Habsburgs. The ‘Ryall E’ and the ‘one that was dead’ was flexible and could change according to personal interpretation and shifting contexts. The restoration of faith and subsequent peace would indicate that this prophecy was part of a ‘golden day’ tradition. This prophecy shows how malleable animal symbolism was in a heraldic environment and is once again a clear example of a Galfridian type prophecy being used to challenge the Elizabethan regime. John Phillips’s and the regime’s suspicions that prophecies were encouraging plotters and their supporters may not have been baseless.

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<sup>73</sup> J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Calendar of Assize Records, Essex Indictments Elizabeth I* (London, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1978) p. 241.

Eight months later in December 1583 Francis Walsingham uncovered a scheme by Francis Throckmorton, the possible elephant of the prophecy, to invade England with the assistance of the Duke of Guise and replace Elizabeth with Mary queen of Scots, the potential white horse of the prophecy.<sup>74</sup> Francis and his brother Thomas had become involved with the plot while travelling in Europe in 1582 and were put in contact with the Spanish ambassador in London, Bernardino de Mendoza by Mary's contact, Thomas Morgan. Spain was to provide the funding for the invasion while the Throckmortons were to orchestrate a Catholic rebellion in England. In response to the plot Mendoza was expelled from England, Throckmorton executed and the Bond of Association questioned all subject's loyalties.<sup>75</sup> The fact that during the time of the plotting prophecies were circulating which ascribed a prominent role to the Throckmorton family in 'rooting out all heresies cleane out of this relme restoringe the church and the catholicke faythe' was no coincidence. Time and again, prophecy appears to be connected to Catholic plots.

### **The Book of Miscellanies**

One year after the discovery of the Throckmorton scheme a Catholic eschatological and prophetic book of miscellanies came to light and appears to incorporate the same strands we have seen in earlier Catholic conspiracies. The location where the book was discovered, close to the border of England and Scotland is similar to the prophecy and plot which supposedly involved the Duke of Norfolk and a Catholic circle in 1572 and the supposed desire to place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne was common to the two plots of 1583. In the beginning of February 1584 Sir Francis Walsingham, through his agent Lord Scrope, ordered a raid on a circle of Catholics in Carlisle.<sup>76</sup> Walsingham hoped to apprehend Richard Cilburne, John Boast and a Scottish Seminary priest named Mouneford who had purportedly returned to the border from further south in England.<sup>77</sup> Although neither Cilburne, Boast nor Mouneford were found, the search brought to light a company of Catholics connected to a number of seminary priests, allegedly Lord Montagu and a Catholic network stretching to Richard Hutton

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<sup>74</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 78/11 fol. 5r (Walsingham to Stafford, January 10 1583-4).

<sup>75</sup> J. D. Staines, *The Tragic Histories of Mary Queen of Scots, 1560-1690: Rhetoric, Passion and Political Literature* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009), p. 88.

<sup>76</sup> That the raid was ordered by Walsingham is clear from Scrope's reply, Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28/1 fol. 126r (Lord Scrope and John Bishop of Carlisle to Secretary Walsingham, 7 February 1584).

<sup>77</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28/1 fol. 126r (Lord Scrope and John Bishop of Carlisle to Secretary Walsingham, 7 February 1584).

of Gray's Inn London.<sup>78</sup> This search and concern with Catholics in the border area with Scotland was prompted by an anxiety over Mary Queen of Scots and her fomenting of rebellion. The English government was also concerned that any attempt to invade England would come through the North and that the border areas were providing a channel for seminary priests to carry out their missionary work in England and then slip across the border to Scotland for safety. During the search the book of miscellanies was discovered amongst the documents in Percival Kirkbride's chamber along with 'news from Scotland' and 'other fantastical and foolish prophecies'.<sup>79</sup> Percival Kirkbride was recorded as a 'notable papist' and was the brother-in-law to Richard Cilburne, the priest being hunted by the Privy Council and an associate of Lancelot Boast, the brother of John Boast, a seminary priest later martyred in Durham on 24 July 1594 and also being hunted by the Privy Council.<sup>80</sup> Both Lancelot and Percival exchanged letters and texts with their brothers as well as sharing their Catholic faith. This highlights the point that the group of Catholics in Carlisle was not isolated and may suggest that the prophetic warnings were circulated. That the book of miscellanies was found in a hunt for John Boast and among his associates in Carlisle reveals that eschatology and prophecy were being used to recruit and support disobedience to Elizabeth and even her deposition. John Boast evaded capture for thirteen years and was implicated in the Babington Conspiracy of 1586 to assassinate Elizabeth and place Mary Queen of Scots on the throne and by this drew suspicion on his brother and his brother's circle in Carlisle.<sup>81</sup> John Boast's proposed role was to 'sound the northe further & also, to see what ayd myghyt be proved in Scotland' and Lord Scrope determined from the examination of Lancelot Boast and his letters that John Boast had recently been in the area.<sup>82</sup> This would place the prophetic and eschatological book in circulation amongst suspected conspirators and connect it to the Babington plot which was to be uncovered in 1586.

The nine folio page long book of miscellanies was an eschatological anthology which applied the prophecies of the Apocalypse to the early modern era. It began with verse prophecies warning England of providential punishments of plagues, battle, famine and

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 53/19 fol. 96r (Examinations of the Babington Conspirators, Sept. 6 1586).

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28/1 fols.126r – 126v (Lord Scrope and John Bishop of Carlisle to Secretary Walsingham, 7 February 1584).

pestilence (the four horsemen of Apocalypse chapter 6) if England did not ‘change [thy] condycion’.<sup>83</sup> The verse prophecies were written in English and accompanied by Latin lamentations on the fall of England, which suggests that the book may have been intended to circulate both at home and abroad and amongst both lay and clerical Catholics. That the intended audience was so diverse makes the eschatology even more striking. Catholics were encouraged to suffer and pray as the text declared that

...This storme

thou shalt endure; With hart contrite, confesse thee,

And to Heavenward address thee.<sup>84</sup>

The notion of addressing complaints and calls for assistance to heaven instead of direct human action draws attention to the important role of interpretation. This prophecy was connected to a group accused of plotting regime change yet the prophecy did not implore its readers to act but instead to endure.

Nevertheless, a few pages after these first warnings we find a more proactive stance being urged. The text argued that

Yff thowe be wyse, O Germaney, Frenchmen

Englyshe flye. And suffer not the Venyse land to joyne in league with  
thee. Behold, for owt of Philip's blodde

a wurthy brute shall ryse. Who shall redeme the worldes mysdedes  
with warlyke enterprise. And the proud

Turke he shall constrayne the trewe faith to embrace,

And thee depryve of princely port and put thee owt

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<sup>83</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 134r (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*



of place.<sup>85</sup>

Unlike the initial warnings a ‘warlyke enterprise’ suggests active conflict. The prophecies and thus the book of miscellanies had a continent-wide relevance as well as specifically addressing England. The threat of the Ottoman Empire was placed on a level with the threat to Catholicism from Protestantism. Venice received a specific mention in this second section of warnings and may have been targeted by the author as an unsuitable ally because of its hazardous position in the 1560s. Venice had been active in opposing the Ottoman forces since 1423 and, although the 1560s were not an active stage of the Ottoman-Venetian war, Venice’s resources were depleted and the conflict had prevented Venice from partaking in the exploration of the New World and the subsequent grab of new resources. Venice also had to tackle the spread of Protestantism within its region and the subsequent repression of Protestantism was spreading Venetian power thin. The prophecy contained in the book of miscellanies pointed to Spain as a redeemer of the world. This is significant because many of the plots which aimed at replacing Elizabeth with Mary Queen of Scots had a Spanish connection. For example the Ridolphi plot discovered in 1571 had supposedly aimed at a Spanish invasion supported by Rome, while Francis Throckmorton claimed under torture in 1583 that he was part of a conspiracy involving Spain to invade England. The Spanish connection was underscored by the Spanish ambassador, Bernadino de Mendoza, who was sent back to Spain in the wake of the Throckmorton scheme. The conspiracy to which the book of miscellanies was more directly related was also felt to have Spanish backing as the Babington plotters of 1586 had travelled to Madrid to ensure Spanish support. This poses the question that as the conspiracy associated with the book of miscellanies shared so much in common with both previous and later plots, was eschatology also a common strand of thought in Catholic conspiracies?

The book of miscellanies fused concerns about the End with an analysis of contemporary politics. The prophecies were followed by a copy of a letter, in English, supposedly sent from Emperor Ferdinand to Elizabeth from Hungary in 1563 which argued for Catholics to have access to the sacraments and some level of toleration.<sup>86</sup> The inclusion of the copy of this alleged letter underscored the book of miscellanies’ Catholic orientation and highlighted a concern for practicalities alongside prophecies. Directly after this letter the book

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<sup>85</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 135r (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>86</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fols.135v – 136r (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

of miscellanies returned to eschatological matters and presented, once again in English, an account of the birth of Antichrist, which was contended to have been copied from a report by the ‘Grand Master of Rhodes’.<sup>87</sup> The alleged authorship claimed the narrative as Catholic and placed it in a context of religious warfare.<sup>88</sup> The manuscript provides three internal dates, 1563, when the prophecies were allegedly commanded by God to be published, that of the proposed letter between the Emperor and the Queen of 24 November 1563, and the date of Antichrist’s suspected birth on 28 May 1564.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, it does not seem plausible that in the apprehensive atmosphere of the Elizabethan period that this manuscript would have circulated without detection for twenty years and thus the manuscript most likely dates from the beginning of the 1580s. However, that three separate parts of the book of miscellanies refer to the beginning of the 1560s and place it in an English context suggests that we must pay attention to the events of these years in England and recognise that it had a bearing on the creation of the document.

The three internal dates provided in the book of miscellanies, 1563 as a whole, 24 November 1563 and 28 May 1564, may provide context for the prophecies and claimed birth of Antichrist or be a means of making the text less controversial by distancing the work in time. When discovered in 1584 the letter and the text could have appeared twenty years old due to this internal dating and thus may have protected the author from serious investigation. For more than a millennium history had been recorded and presented as a prediction.<sup>90</sup> This device of prophecy after the fact was closely related to the tradition of pseudepigraphy which was present in the book of miscellanies’ claims to authorship by a ‘Grand Master of Rhodes’ and the letter’s supposed authorship by ‘Emperor Ferdinand’.<sup>91</sup> The cursive secretary hand in which the text is written cannot assist in narrowing the possible dating other than suggesting that the text was indeed written between 1564 and 1584. The anonymous prophet claimed that Christ instructed him to circulate this prophecy specifically in 1563. The text declared that

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<sup>87</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 136v, (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>88</sup> The Grand Master of Rhodes is discussed later in this chapter, pp. 186 – 187.

<sup>89</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 136v, (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>90</sup> J. J. Collins, *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Cambridge, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2015), p.219, T. Thornton, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2006), ‘Introduction’.

<sup>91</sup> J. J. Collins, *Apocalypse, Prophecy, and Pseudepigraphy: On Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Cambridge, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2015), pp. 219 – 268, Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 136v, (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

When fyve three hundrethe years are gon, sithe Christ, our Lord, was  
born. And six times ten with three be course to us are worne. All this  
the ruler of the skyes, who sytteth in Heaven so hye,

Badde me to tell unto the worlde, as starres had told to me.<sup>92</sup>

The authority for the prophetic verses was derived within the text from both God and astrology. In early modern Europe it was widely held that one could understand the future by studying the heavens. Michel de Nostredame, more commonly known as Nostradamus, produced a collection of long term prophecies alongside yearly almanacs. Nostradamus's almanacs were some of the most widely consumed in the 1560s and the fact that political leaders and monarchs consulted him strengthened the idea that the divine plan was communicated in the stars.<sup>93</sup> Nostradamus's own prophecies may have been a source of added support to the anonymous verses in the book of miscellanies. Nostradamus, like many other prophets, cloaked his political predictions in vagueness and they could thus be interpreted as applying to a variety of events. For example, in 1563 Nostradamus saw in the stars imminent 'invasions & tumults and opressions of the population & divers talke of warre'.<sup>94</sup> This prediction was made, translated into English, printed and circulated the same year that the verses in the book of miscellanies were said to have begun circulating. Nostradamus's claims were part of a national and international early modern culture of attempting to interpret the divine plan for the future from the Book of Nature. Therefore it would appear that the book of miscellanies should not be considered unusual.

In the years which the book of miscellanies claimed to have been composed Elizabeth's rule was particularly unstable. In 1562 Elizabeth had almost died of small pox and with her survival calls for her to marry and produce an heir were renewed. The anxiety over the succession of the crown resulted in the 1563 Parliament debating potential suitors and a suggestion that the Catholic Archduke Charles of Austria would bring stability. In 1563 the

<sup>92</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 135r, (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>93</sup> L. Hill Curth, *English Almanacs, Astrology and Popular Medicine, 1550 – 1700* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007), R. H. Popkin, 'Predicting, Divining, Prophecy and Foretelling from Nostradamus to Hume', *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 5 (1984), pp. 117 – 35, O. Faracovi, 'The Return to Ptolemy', in: B. Dooley (ed), *A Companion to Astrology in the Renaissance* (Leiden, Brill, 2014), pp. 97 – 98.

<sup>94</sup> M. de Nostradamus, *An almanack for the yere. M. D. lxiij. Composed by M. Michael Nostradamus Doctour in Phisicke, of Salon of Craux in Prouince* ([London : S.n.], [1563]), sig. Ciiv – Ciir.

Archduke was also considered a possible suitor of Mary Queen of Scots. However both Mary and the Archduke's brother rejected this possibility despite Mary's uncle, the Cardinal of Lorraine, supporting the prospect in order to solidify Mary's rule in Scotland. The political landscape in Scotland in the 1560s was one of a young Catholic queen trying to manage different fighting factions which had competing foreign support.<sup>95</sup> This political milieu was significant as the book of miscellanies was discovered in a border town just ten miles south. Mary had returned to Scotland from France in 1561 but with the Massacre of Vassy beginning the French Wars of Religion in 1562, French influence in Scotland declined. One consequence of this was that those who supported the Reformation in the Scottish Lowlands gained greater sway as England sought to extend its influence north of the border. The circle of border Catholics may have been trying to disseminate the notion that Antichrist, in the form of Protestantism, was extending its reach and thus Catholics in both Scotland and in the border areas needed to support Mary.

Further south the hostility towards Catholicism from the regime was slowly increasing and in 1563 Foxe published his *Acts and Monuments*, setting the dispute in a clearly apocalyptic and eschatological framework on the title page.<sup>96</sup> It was also perceived in 1563 that London and the South, where the Queen and Privy Council were based, had received providential punishment from God. Stow's *Annales* related that in 1563 'for as much as the plague of pestilence was so hot in the citie of London... the poore citizens of London, were this yeere plagued with a three folde plague, pestilence, scarcitie of Mony, and dearth of victuals'.<sup>97</sup> The plague which raged in 1563 and continued into 1564 was so widespread that

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<sup>95</sup> A. S. Wilkinson, *Mary Queen of Scots and French Public Opinion, 1542 – 1600* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2004), pp. 21 – 22, K. M. Brown, *Noble Power in Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

<sup>96</sup> J. Foxe, *Actes and monuments of these latter and perillous dayes touching matters of the Church, wherein ar comprehended and described the great persecutions [and] horrible troubles, that have bene wrought and practised by the Romishe prelates, speciallye in this realme of England and Scotlande, from the yeare of our Lorde a thousande, unto the tyme nowe present. Gathered and collected according to the true copies [and] wrytinges certificatorie, as wel of the parties them selves that suffered, as also out of the bishops registers, which wer the doers therof* (John Day, dwelling over Aldersgate, Cum privilegio Regi[a]e Maiestatis, 1563), title page, see: P. Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English apocalyptic visions from the Reformation to the eve of the Civil War* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1978), C. A. Patrides and J. Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance thought and literature: patterns, antecedents and repercussions* (New York, Cornell University Press, 1984), A. Zakai, *Exile and Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration to America* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 36 – 37.

<sup>97</sup> J. Stow, *The annales of England faithfully collected out of the most autenticall authors, records, and other monuments of antiquitie, from the first inhabitation vntill this present yeere 1592 by John Stow citizen of London* (London, Ralfe Newbery and Eliot's Court Press, 1592), p. 1119.

it prevented many works from being recorded in the Stationers' Register.<sup>98</sup> This treble affliction would appear out of the ordinary and was not the only event to occur in this year deemed strange. Stow recorded how 'An earthquake was in the month of September in divers places of this realme, speciallie in Lincolne and Northamptonshire'.<sup>99</sup> There were also signs in the heavens and Stow documented that 'from the first day of December, till the 12 was such continuall lightening and thunder, especially the same 12 day at night, that the like had not been seene nor hard of before'.<sup>100</sup> Plagues, earthquakes and incidents in the heavens were an integral part of the Apocalypse and preceded, accompanied and continued after Antichrist's birth. It was also similar to the events prophesised at the beginning of the book of miscellanies.<sup>101</sup>

The supposed year of Antichrist's birth, 1564, according to the book of miscellanies was a year in which reports of monstrous births began spreading. John Barker promised to relate *The true description of a monstrous chylde borne in the Ile of wight* and in a separate ballad a year later the same author claimed to present *The true description of a monstrous chylde borne in the cytie of Antwarpe* and dated the birth to 1564.<sup>102</sup> This ballad writer specialised in reporting providential punishments for sins and was clearly meeting a popular demand as he retained the same themes between 1561 and 1570. Although these were Protestant ballads this does not mean that Catholics did not hear or enjoy them. Catholics did not cut themselves off from their Protestant neighbours and communities. In keeping with Ronnie Po-chia Hsia's comments regarding sixteenth-century Germany, 'Both Protestants and Catholics interpreted the same monstrous prodigies for their own advantage'.<sup>103</sup> Kathryn Brammall has drawn attention to how from the 1560s onwards there was a supposed increase

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<sup>98</sup> E. Arber, *A Transcript of the Stationers Registers, 1554 – 1640, Vol. I: 1557 – 1571* (London, Privately Printed, 1875).

<sup>99</sup> J. Stow, *The annales of England faithfully collected out of the most autenticall authors, records, and other monuments of antiquitie, from the first inhabitation vntill this present yeere 1592 by John Stow citizen of London* (London, Ralfe Newbery and Eliot's Court Press, 1592), p. 1120.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 134r (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>102</sup> J. Barker, *The true description of a monstrous chylde borne in the Ile of wight* (London, Wylliam Gryffith, 1565), and, J. Barker, *The true description of a monstrous chylde borne in the cytie of Antwarpe* (London, Wylliam Gryffith, 1565).

<sup>103</sup> R. Po-chia Hsia, 'A Time for Monsters: Monstrous Births, Propoganda, and the German Reformation', in: L. Lungar Knoppers & J. B. Landes (eds.), *Monstrous Bodies / Political Monstrosities in Early Modern Europe* (London, Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 80, D. Wilson, *Signs and portents: monstrous births from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (London, Routledge, 1993).

in monstrous births in England specifically and that this geographical specificity was considered to show God's particular displeasure with the nation.<sup>104</sup> In the Catholic account of the birth of Antichrist the monster was still in a distant land, Babylon, but the preceding verses suggested that it was to be specifically heeded by England.<sup>105</sup> Early modern monsters were prophecies without fixed outcomes. The report of the birth of Antichrist may be seen as an extension of the popular literature which described monstrous births and the rise in monstrous bodies as expressions of political and social monstrosities. As Wes Williams has argued, monsters were meaningful warnings but the future depended on the human response to this divine sign.<sup>106</sup> The idea that monstrous births demanded action makes the fact that the report of Antichrist's birth was circulating amongst suspected plotters all the more important.

The discovery of the book of miscellanies amongst suspected plotters in 1584 places it in the turbulent context of the late Elizabethan period and the decade when the struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism in England was reaching a fever pitch. The 1580s, like the 1560s and 1570s, had experienced events which could be interpreted eschatologically by both Catholics and Protestants and there was a general anxiety amongst the Protestant authorities regarding the extent of the Jesuits' power to subvert the populace.<sup>107</sup> The Jesuit mission to England had begun in 1580, four years prior to the discovery of the book of miscellanies, and was believed to have been heralded by an earthquake on the 6 April in the Dover Straits.<sup>108</sup> The earthquake itself was widely interpreted as a portent of Doom.<sup>109</sup> By 1581 the regime had begun to clamp down on Catholics with harsher penalties such as the Act against Reconciliation to Rome and in December the Jesuit missionary Edmund Campion was executed causing an outcry across Catholic Europe. The intensified anxiety within the regime which the Jesuit mission generated resulted in an increase in the number of Catholics executed in 1582. This

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<sup>104</sup> K. M. Brammal, 'Monstrous Metamorphosis: Nature, Morality, and the Rhetoric of Monstrosity in Tudor England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Spring, 1996), p. 8, W. Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Earl Modern Culture: Mighty Magic* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 1.

<sup>105</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 137r (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>106</sup> W. Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Earl Modern Culture: Mighty Magic* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> A. Walsham, 'This Newe Army of Satan': The Jesuit Mission and the Formation of Public Opinion in Elizabethan England', in: D. Lemmings & C. Walker, *Moral Panics, the Media and the Law in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 53.

<sup>108</sup> J. Gee, *The foot out of the snare* (London, 1624), p. 54.

<sup>109</sup> Church of England, *The order of prayer, and other exercises, vpon Wednesdays and Frydayes, to avert and turne Gods wrath from vs, threatned by the late terrible earthquake: to be used in all parish churches and houtholdes throughout the realme, by order given from the Queenes Maiesties most honourable privie counsel* (London, Christopher Barker, 1580).

may have stimulated the production and circulation of prophetic verses to encourage Catholics to either remain steadfast in the faith or act. As argued in chapter six, an increase in executions could also have been interpreted as an eschatological sign.<sup>110</sup> In parallel to the increased persecution there was an upsurge in Catholic activity to bring about regime change. For example, Persons related that

Father Critton [had] returned [from Scotland to Roan] in April 1582, and brought answer from the Duke of Lenox then governor of Scotland and the young king to the full contentment of the Duke of Guise (with whom we had conferred before at his house at Ewe in Normandy about the Cath[olic] cause in both realms of England and Scotland & for the delivery of the Q. of Scotts then prisoner in England).<sup>111</sup>

Persons's account reveals that some Catholics pinned their hopes for regime change on the imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots and foreign intervention. It underlines how important Scotland was for the movement of conspirators and seditious ideas. Therefore the fact that a group of Catholics with alleged designs for replacing Elizabeth with Mary were discovered in Carlisle, 10 miles from the border, and that they had an eschatological book of miscellanies in their possession during a time of heightened eschatological expectation seems unsurprising.

Contained within the book of miscellanies was an alleged report of the birth of Antichrist designed to be read or heard by early modern English Catholics.<sup>112</sup> Alongside the deliberately English context the report was placed in a European perspective. The report, through its supposed author, referred to the five historic Catholic Orders which were in Jerusalem until the city was captured by Saladin in 1187. Through this reference it created a link between the alleged birth of Antichrist in 1564 and the crusades. The author was most likely claiming to have a copy of a letter from the Grand Master of the Hospitallers. The Hospitallers moved from Jerusalem to Rhodes in 1309 and remained there until 1522. The term 'The Great Master of Rhodes' may suggest an even earlier date for this section of the text than 1564 as Rhodes fell to the Ottoman Empire in 1522 following a six month siege by Sultan

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<sup>110</sup> This idea is analysed in chapter 6, 'Persecution and Identity Confirmation', pp. 223 – 226.

<sup>111</sup> J. H. Pollen (ed.), *The Memoirs of Father Robert Persons*, Catholic Record Society, Miscellanea II (London, Arden Press, 1906), p. 30.

<sup>112</sup> The purported author of the report, 'The Great Master of Rhodes, of the Order of Jerusalem', would not have naturally penned written communication in English so the use of English indicates its intended audience.

Suleyman and the Knights of Rhodes became the Knights of Malta from 1530 onwards.<sup>113</sup> The text thus claimed to be authored by a Great Master of an Order which did not exist at the time the text itself claims to be written.

There are a few possible explanations. The text could have been written by a Knight of Rhodes and the 1564 date could be a prophecy yet this is unlikely as it does not prophesy Antichrist's birth but rather reports the events as current. Another possible explanation is that the supposed author's name was sourced from early modern historiography of the crusades which had wide interest because of the ongoing threat from the Ottoman Empire to Christendom. Contemporary events would have brought the Knights of Rhodes, then under the name the Knights of Malta, to prominence in European consciousness in 1565 when they repelled an Ottoman force which was besieging Malta. If Malta had fallen it would have placed Sicily and mainland Italy under threat of Ottoman conquest. Thus the supposed author may have been chosen to reference an example of a heavily outnumbered Catholic force winning against a religious foe and thereby saving Christendom. This may have appealed to a possible audience of potential conspirators who may have identified as a small group who were heavily outnumbered and believed that they were waging a war for their faith, nation and Christendom. Lastly, there is a reference in a letter from Lord Scrope to Walsingham on 8 February 1584 which described how two gentleman had lately been to visit Lady Fernihurst in Scotland who were accompanied by one Layton, the son of Sir Cuthbert Layton who was a deceased knight of Rhodes.<sup>114</sup> Perhaps this was a genuine letter sent by the Master of Rhodes to Cuthbert Layton, which passed to his son, who then circulated it amongst Scottish Catholics? Alternatively, as the letter between Lord Scrope and Walsingham was sent around the time that the book of miscellanies was discovered, Lord Scrope's claim suggests how seriously the authorities took the eschatological pronouncements.

The report of Antichrist's birth makes an interesting reference which places it in a Reformation and European context and highlights how carefully it has been constructed. It claimed that a 'friar of Viterbo, a doctor in divinity, gave such credit to the child and his

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<sup>113</sup> P. Emiralioglu, *Geographical Knowledge and Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014), p.29, p. 35 fn. 87.

<sup>114</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28/1 fol. 143r (Lord Scrope to Walsingham 8 February 1584).



miracles that he affirmed the child was the son of God, so that a great number of people fully believe in him'.<sup>115</sup> This was most likely a reference to Anniius of Viterbo and a commentary on truth and scholarship. Anniius of Viterbo was a Dominican friar who became known for his forgeries and generated much debate about historical understanding in mid-sixteenth century Europe.<sup>116</sup> Anniius studied theology at Florence and completed his doctorate in theology around 1469.<sup>117</sup> The reference to a friar of Viterbo aiding in the deception of many people may have been a subtle gibe at Luther and an attempt to link him to Antichrist in the subtext. Luther had published a summary of world chronology in 1541 which used Lorenzo Valla's *Declamatio de falso credita et ementita donatione Constantini* and Anniius of Viterbo's *Commentaria Fratri Joannis Anni Viterbiensis super opera diversorum auctorum de Antiquitatibus Loquentium*.<sup>118</sup> Written in 1498 Anniius's work was quickly exposed as based on his own forged texts but as David Mark Whitford has analysed, the way in which Luther used Anniius's work suggests that he did not realise that it was fraudulent.<sup>119</sup> Anniius of Viterbo's work was known in early modern England as it had been used by John Bale in his dedicatory letter to Elizabeth Tudor in 1548, which accompanied the future queen's translation of Marguerite of Navarre's *Miroir de l'ame pecheresse*.<sup>120</sup> This reference would have thus stood out clearly in the text and drew on a large number of existing ideas. Viterbo also had a strong connection to eschatological prophecy and challenging Protestant ideas. The report may thus have been trying to draw on its readers' underlying knowledge of this. The city's patron saint, Santa Rosa, was known for eliminating, at the end of the thirteenth century, those who supported emperors instead of popes.<sup>121</sup> In terms of eschatology, Viterbo had a famous and papally approved eschatological prophet – Egidio, or Giles, of Viterbo. Egidio was a former general of the Augustinian Order and created a Cardinal in 1517 by Leo X.<sup>122</sup> Egidio had explained his concept of history in his manuscript work 'Historia Viginti Saeculorum' written during the period of the Fifth Lateran

<sup>115</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28 fol. 137v (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>116</sup> A. Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450 – 1800* (London, Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 76 – 97.

<sup>117</sup> D. M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009) p. 45.

<sup>118</sup> M. Luther, *Supputatio annorum mundi* (Cologne, Joannes Rure, 1544).

<sup>119</sup> The forgery was exposed 1504 by Petrus Crinitius. See: D. M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009), p. 44, Whitford argues that this was because Anniius told stories which Luther wished to believe, p. 44.

<sup>120</sup> J. Bale, 'Epistle Dedicatory' in: Elizabeth Tudor, *A Godly Medytacyon of the Christen Sowle Concerning a Love Towardes God and Hys Christe* ([Wesel], Dirik van der Straten, 1548), sig. A2.v. – A3.r.

<sup>121</sup> C. Kleinhenz (ed.), *Medieval Italy: An Encyclopedia* (London, Routledge, 2004), Vol. I – II, p. 1156.

<sup>122</sup> R. J. Wilkinson, *Orientalism, Aramaic, and Kabbalah in the Catholic Reformation: The First Printing of the Syriac New Testament* (Leiden, Brill, 2007), p. 29.

Council.<sup>123</sup> John W. O'Malley has described how in this work Egidio made clear that he 'saw Scripture as a tissue of predictions about the course of history'.<sup>124</sup> In 1530, Egidio detailed his prophetic hopes for a coming golden age led by a last world emperor and angelic pope.<sup>125</sup> Egidio's prophecies, or prophecies by authors claiming to be Egidio, were circulating in Elizabethan England. There was a 'Prophecy of the Bishop of Viterbo' which came to the English authority's attention in December 1560 which predicted the reign of a new king Francis who would restore peace to Christendom.<sup>126</sup> Was this a prophecy of a Catholic last world emperor circulating in England? The eschatological undertones of the suggested author is tantalising. The Viterbo reference places the book of miscellanies in an English Catholic prophetic tradition which looked for regime change and the restoration of peace and drew on eschatological predictions.

The book of miscellanies was not the only or last Catholic prophecy of regime change to be discovered which suggests that it may just be the tip of the iceberg. For example, on 24 August 1586 Sybill Horte and John Toye gave information against Symon Yomans of Gloucestershire on account of a prophecy uttered by him of the Queen's imminent death. They alleged that Sybill Horte said

her Ma[jes]tie... was in some p[er]ill by reason of some enmyes  
about her where unto the same Yomans answerde and saide. It wilbe  
worsere before it be better, for saie he, the profecie dothe speake that we  
shall have three foughten fieldes before their tyme twelvemonths and  
that in the firste feilde our queen shall be slayne, Then said Sybill Horte,  
god save her and preserve her from her enymies, Then the said Yomans  
answered againe and said God will not nor cannot save her, for the  
profercie dothe speake that this is the last yeare of her Raigne, and then

<sup>123</sup> *Historia Viginti Saeculorum* is preserved in: Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, MS lat. 502.

<sup>124</sup> J. W. O'Malley, 'Fulfilment of the Christian Golden Age under Pope Julius II: Text of a discourse of Giles of Viterbo 1507', *Traditio XXV*, Vol. 25 (1969), p. 273.

<sup>125</sup> For Egidio's prophecy see: F. Secret (ed.), *Schechina e Libellus de Litteris Hebraicis* (Rome, Centro Internazionale di Studi Umanistici, 1959), Egidio's prophecy of a Golden Age was published in: J. W. O. Malley, 'Fulfilment of the Christian Golden Age under Pope Julius II: Text of a discourse of Giles of Viterbo 1507', *Traditio XXV* (1969), pp. 265 – 338, a summary of Egidio's prophecy and its impact is given by R. J. Wilkinson, *Orientalism, Aramaic, and Kabbalah in the Catholic Reformation: The First Printing of the Syriac New Testament* (Leiden, Brill, 2007).

<sup>126</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 70/21 fol. 18r (Prophecy of the Bishop of Viterbo).

we shall have the latter lawe and then also we shall have fewer Queenes  
and soo from thenceforth a merrye worlde.<sup>127</sup>

This prophecy, like the book of miscellanies prognosticating the time when ‘the mass shall last for ever and aye’, looked to a future when the ‘latter lawe’ shall be restored.<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless, the 1586 prophecy was focused on the continuation of earthly time, as shown in the statement that ‘we shall have fewer Queenes and soo from thenceforth a myrrye worlde’. Although the reference to ‘fewer Queenes’ may have been a comment about female rule it could also be an expression of hope for the removal of Elizabeth and her replacement with Mary Queen of Scots. The prophecy says ‘fewer’ not ‘no more’ and both Elizabeth and Mary had claims to the English throne. The allegation shows how seriously prophecy was taken. The idea that God cannot save Elizabeth because her death had been prophesised is significant and brings to light another reason why prophecy was so dangerous. Prophecy created a notion of inevitability which in turn encouraged people to take extreme steps, such as killing the monarch.

### **The Babington Plot**

Prophecy was certainly a part of the Babington conspiracy. Exposed on the 17 July 1586, the Babington Plot was a scheme to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and, with the help of the French Catholic League and Spain, place the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. This in turn would unite the realms of Scotland and England under a Catholic monarch and ensure a Catholic succession by removing James VI from Protestant influence. At the centre of the conspiracy to assassinate the Queen were two English Catholic priests, John Ballard and Anthony Tyrell. John Ballard was ordained at Châlons on 4 March 1581 and was sent to England just over three weeks later travelling under the aliases of Thompson, Turner, and Captain Foscue or Fortescue.<sup>129</sup> Anthony Tyrell was ordained at the English College Rome and sent to England in 1580.<sup>130</sup> The two would meet in the Gatehouse prison, from which

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<sup>127</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/192 fol. 80r (Information of Sybill Horte and John Toye against Symon Yomans).

<sup>128</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/28/1, fol. 138r (Book of Miscellanies 1584).

<sup>129</sup> F. Edwards, ‘John Ballard (d.1586)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1236> [Accessed 3 March 2014].

<sup>130</sup> P. Holmes, ‘Tyrell, Anthony (1552–1615)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27950> [Accessed 3 March 2014].

Ballard helped Tyrell escape in 1581. In 1584 Ballard and Tyrell headed to the continent landing in Normandy and making their way via institutions such as the English College in Rheims to Rome. It was here that, according to a doubtful confession made under the threat of torture, the conspiracy was supposedly begun by Ballard and Tyrrell. The two priests returned to England in 1585 via Paris with the plot in mind, meeting with Charles Paget and other English Catholic exiles on various occasions during their stay. They then persuaded Anthony Babington to entertain the possibility of the plot. Anthony Babington, whom the plot is named after, was born in 1561 at Dethick in Derbyshire to a family suspected of papistry and with a history of political rebellion.<sup>131</sup> He is likely to have first come into contact with Mary Queen of Scots in 1579 when he served as a page in the earl of Shrewsbury's household, where Mary was being guarded.<sup>132</sup> The following year Babington travelled to Paris where he met Mary's ambassador to France, James Beaton, and Thomas Morgan. Babington and the gentlemen he associated with in London were described by William Weston as 'daring in defence of the Catholic faith in its days of stress; and ready for any arduous enterprise whatsoever that might advance the common Catholic cause'.<sup>133</sup> It appears that Babington and his companions may have been encouraged to this daring defence of their faith through prophecy. It was noted that in 1586 amongst the books and manuscripts found in Anthony Babington's possessions during his investigation for the conspiracy named after him was 'A peece of paper in written hand conteyning 79 lynes in Lattin ..' and 'One peece of paper conteyning 174 lynes being prophecies'.<sup>134</sup> Also discovered were 'Another peece of paper 17 lynes... A peece of paper cont. 161 Lynes' and 'A paper conteyning 76 lynes'.<sup>135</sup> It was recorded that there was more prophecy 'found owt being w[i]thin One Booke' and another 'Sheete of paper cont[aining] 61 Lynes'.<sup>136</sup> Could the prophecies 'being w[i]thin One Booke' be the book of miscellanies which had been circulating on the peripheries of the plot? We can only speculate.

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<sup>131</sup> Anthony Babington's mother, Mary, was the granddaughter of Thomas, Lord Darcy, who was beheaded for his role in the Pilgrimage of Grace.

<sup>132</sup> P. Williams, 'Babington, Anthony (1561–1586)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/967>

[Accessed 22 March 2014].

<sup>133</sup> P. Carman (trans.), *William Weston: The Autobiography of an Elizabethan* (London, Longmans, 1955), p. 99.

<sup>134</sup> London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 50. fol. 167v (An inventory of the goods, books and effects of Anthony Babington, Esq. by Lord Burghley's order, taken by the Sheriff of Nottinghamshire, &c. Sept. 13, 1586).

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.* fol. 168r.

As this chapter has already shown, the book of miscellanies, with its eschatological warnings, was produced and circulated in connection with Catholic conspiracies and amongst suspected plotters. It may be supposed that other plotters similarly circulated eschatological warnings or used eschatological language. However, one finds within the sources only vague and sparse references instead of tangible evidence. For example, in relation to the 1586 Babington plot to kill Elizabeth and replace her with Mary Queen of Scots Thomas Morgan's intercepted letter to Gilbert Curle is suggestive but not exact. Morgan claimed that 'there are many means which are being embraced to remove the beast which troubles all the world'.<sup>137</sup> That the term 'beast' was used to describe Elizabeth and more broadly her co-religionists may indicate that Morgan and Curle perceived the queen and Protestants in general as the apocalyptic Antichrist. Morgan's language gains greater significance when we consider the many beasts predicted to trouble the world in the Apocalypse.<sup>138</sup> Furthermore the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel were communicated in terms of beasts.<sup>139</sup> If Elizabeth was either of the beasts from the Apocalypse murder could become a religious imperative and those who undertook it the eschatological agents of the divine plan.

This was in fact suggested in Anthony Tyrell's confession regarding the Babington conspiracy. Tyrell claimed that

we were brought up one day into the Pope's private chamber—this was Gregory XIII —... to whom the rector made a long speech of us. our coming to Rome after great labours that we had done in England and persecutions suffered, and finally of our requests unto his Holiness... [the Pope] answered that he would not only allow of the action of him that should kill so wicked a Jezebel... but for his labour he would think him worthy to be canonised for a saint.<sup>140</sup>

Gregory XIII's reported description of Elizabeth as 'so wicked a Jezebel' suggests that he viewed her as the eschatological Whore.<sup>141</sup> In Gregory's opinion this would make her

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<sup>137</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 53/18 fol. 94r (Thomas Morgan to Curle, July 4 1586).

<sup>138</sup> Apocalypse 13 contains John's vision of the two beasts, one from the sea and one from the land.

<sup>139</sup> Daniel 7:1 – 28.

<sup>140</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 53/19 fol. 67r (Confession of Anthony Tyrell, addressed to Lord Burghley, August 30 1586).

<sup>141</sup> That Elizabeth may have been described as Jezebel by Popes of Rome and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church since the 1570 Bull of Excommunication is discussed in chapter 4, pp. 131 – 141.

assassination a holy action. However this evidence is complicated by the fact that it was a ‘confession’ made under torture and recorded by the state. Implicating the Pope, and by extension all Catholics, in a conspiracy to kill the queen was politically useful to the Elizabethan authorities and would permit the total exclusion of all Catholics from political life and provide post hoc justification for the penal laws. The documentation surrounding the Babington plot is further complicated by the fact that Walsingham’s agent, Gilbert Gifford, was involved very early on and thus could have shaped the plot and the language to fit what Walsingham wanted to discover. Nevertheless, Tyrell’s ‘confession’ is supported by Thomas Sailisbury, another Babington conspirator, who claimed that he ‘woulde doe nothings but that wch shoulde be to the glorie of god’.<sup>142</sup> Religiously motivated political assassination had shaken the Elizabethan regime in 1584, the same year that the book of miscellanies was discovered, when William of Orange, an ally and close Protestant neighbour to Elizabeth, was shot by the devout Catholic and Spanish agent, Balthasar Gérard.<sup>143</sup> In the years following Philip II described the assassination in terms of an act of God and honoured the Gerard family, providing them with a crest which symbolised God’s revenge.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, in England, killing the queen was presented as a religious act and therefore it would be reasonable to expect that the conviction that Elizabeth was Jezebel influenced this thinking. With prophecy and this eschatological identification so closely connected to the plot we might expect to find more mention of it in the sources.

The discovery of the plot and the execution of the plotters did not halt the spread of Catholic prophecy, rather, the aftermath of the Babington Plot and the likeliness of Mary Queen of Scots execution inspired their own Catholic prophecies. Following the movement of Mary to Fotheringay Castle rumours and predictions spread which bound Mary’s fate with England’s. Charles Dubignon was examined in Leicester in October 1586 and maintained that he had overheard Edward Sawford, a local embroider, claim that “if the Queen of Scots were put to death there would be great trouble in England; that Merlin had prophesies [of] a pleasant goldern world after such troubles.”<sup>145</sup> This shows how quickly prophecy adapted to changing

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<sup>142</sup> London, British Library, Harley 290 fol. 172r (Confession of Salisbury, September 21 1586).

<sup>143</sup> L. Jardine, *The Awful End of Prince William the Silent: The First Assassination of a Head of State with a Handgun* (London, Harper Perennial, 2006), p. 19.

<sup>144</sup> J. van der Steen, *Memory Wars in the Low Countries, 1566 – 1700* (Leiden, Brill, 2015), p. 117.

<sup>145</sup> M. Bateson (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1905), p. 229.

events. As we have seen in the chapter concerning the identification of Elizabeth I as Jezebel, the execution of Mary had great consequences for Catholic eschatological thought.<sup>146</sup> With the eschatological context, Mary Queen of Scots as a figure encouraged prophecy and political action both during her life and after her death.

## **Conclusion**

The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that Protestant anxiety surrounding the role of prophecy in Catholic plotting for regime change was not unfounded. The 1572 plot involving a group of Catholics in Rockliffe indicates that, similar to the prophetic challenges in Henry VIII's reign, Galfridian prophecy was being used to consider regime change. The painted prophecies which became the subject of accusations between Edward de Vere and Henry Howard and Charles Arundel in 1581 show that there were multiple means to prophetically challenge Elizabeth's rule. Whether the accusation was true or not, it is telling that it was believable and taken seriously by the authorities. In 1583 two accusations highlight how prophetic speculation and discontent was building. The 1583 incidents show the continuation of the importance of Galfridian type prophecy and how the regime feared that 'golden day' prophecies were circulating and having an influence amongst Elizabeth's Catholic subjects. In 1584 a prophetic and eschatological book of miscellanies was discovered amongst a group of Catholics in Carlisle. This book and network wove together many strands seen in previous plots. The location of the group, the connection to Catholic priests, foreign assistance, a focus on Mary Queen of Scots and a religious motivation for drastic action mirrored what had occurred throughout Elizabeth's reign from the 1570s onwards. With the similarities between the circumstances and practicalities of the supposed plot, it is possible that the prophecies and eschatology contained within the book of miscellanies were not unique. Certainly, two years later we find tantalising evidence that eschatology influenced the Babington plotters.

This chapter suggests that Elizabethan Catholic prophecy is an area in need of further study, which has been overlooked in previous historiography. The gunpowder plot of 1605 was beyond the strictures of this thesis but may benefit from a fresh examination.<sup>147</sup> The book of

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<sup>146</sup> Chapter 4, pp. 149 – 155.

<sup>147</sup> Mark Nicholls has argued regarding the leader of the gunpowder plot that 'When Catesby recruited to the Plot, his arguments were underpinned by anger, and by an apocalyptic vision of the future for Catholicism in

miscellanies may just be the tip of the iceberg. Its eschatological prophecies and the eschatological context in which Catholic prophecies were being made and circulated add to our understanding of Catholic conspiracies in the Elizabethan period. This adds a new dimension to plotters' motivation for such extreme political action. The role of prophecy in Catholic plots shows how ideas considered previously in this thesis were translated into action. Catholic prophecy and conspiracy highlights that eschatology did not just effect how the future was thought about but had implications for the present. Individual Catholic thought began with a devotional apocalypticism. This spiritual eschatology was heightened as the Reformation became understood as a clear sign of the fulfilment of apocalyptic prophecy and the final battle between the True and False Church. With this worldview Catholics began to speculate on the identity of Antichrist and Jezebel. The notion that Antichrist and Jezebel were in the world resulted in two types of action which Catholics believed followed the divine plan: acting as God's agents to forcibly change the regime or suffering persecution and/or martyrdom. It is to the latter that the final chapter of this thesis turns.

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England', see: M. Nicholls, 'Strategy and Motivation in the Gunpowder Plot', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 50, No. 4 (Dec., 2007), p. 797.



## **6: Eschatology and Militant Passivity**

Alongside encouraging conspiracy and attempts to kill Elizabeth, eschatological beliefs supported what I have termed a militant passivity among the Jesuits and missionary priests dedicated to the reconversion of England. Historical research has highlighted the apocalyptic and eschatological context within which John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* understood and presented protestant martyrdoms.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Freeman has investigated the Catholic contesting of 'true' martyrs and the extent of Catholic refutation of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* and how this helped to delineate the True and False Church.<sup>2</sup> Brad Gregory has emphasised how martyrs intensified and sustained the religious conflict and reminded us that the 'primary image in late medieval Christianity depicted a martyr: the crucifix: central to the space of collective worship from the smallest chapel to the grandest Cathedral'.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, despite Gregory's claim that 'it would be difficult to find a less apocalyptic indicator in the period than the liturgical calendar of the Roman Martyrology',<sup>4</sup> Catholic apocalypticism and eschatology and its relationship with Catholic martyrdom remains a topic in need of further exploration. Anne Dillon has touched upon Catholic apocalypticism in her seminal study *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535 – 1603*, but does not investigate it as a separate theme. Dillon argued that 'The battle with Antichrist was waged around the scaffold, before and after execution, and even in the relics of the martyrs'.<sup>5</sup> This chapter will consider how placing Catholic martyrdoms back into an eschatological worldview can add to our understanding of agency and thus reconsider Susannah Brietz Monta's claim that 'passive forms of resistance ranged from recusancy to martyrdom'.<sup>6</sup> This thesis will investigate the eschatological context of missionary activities. It will assess how these ideas were put into

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<sup>1</sup> P. Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1978), R. Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse: Sixteenth Century Apocalypticism, Millenarianism and the English Reformation: from John Bale to John Foxe and Thomas Brightman* (Oxford, Sutton Courtenay Press, 1978), C. A. Patrides & J. A. Wittreich (eds.), *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance Thought and Literature: Patterns, Antecedents, and Repercussions* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984), W. J. Torrance Kirby, *Persuasion and Conversion: Essays on Religion, Politics, and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Brill, Leiden, 2013), p. 149, W. Johnston, *Revelation Restored: The Apocalypse in Later Seventeenth Century England* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2011), 'Introduction', A. Walsham, 'History, Memory, and the English Reformation', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 55, Issue 04 (December 2012), p. 905.

<sup>2</sup> T. S. Freeman, 'The Power of Polemic: Catholic Responses to the Calendar in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs'', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol.61, no.3 (2010), pp. 475 – 495.

<sup>3</sup> B. S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>5</sup> A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535 – 1603* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2002), pp. 102 – 103.

<sup>6</sup> S. Brietz Monta, *A Fig for Fortune by Anthony Copley: A Catholic response to The Faerie Queene* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016), p. 28.

practice and examine closely Edmund Campion's execution. It will consider how martyrdom was perceived to confirm eschatological identities and that the End had begun. This chapter will evaluate how and why martyrdom was deemed an apocalyptic blessing from God and analyse the idea of eschatological vengeance and its relationship with martyrdom.

### **Historiography**

Since the sixteenth century the status of Elizabethan Catholics as either martyrs or traitors has been hotly debated. This is illustrated by the different presentations of the death of the most famous Catholic in Elizabethan England, Edmund Campion. Two anonymous Protestant accounts printed in 1581, *An Advertisement and Defence of Trueth Against Her Backbiters* and *A Triumph for True Subjects and a Terror unto all Traitors*, depict Campion as a traitor who seduced loyal subjects to reject Elizabeth's authority.<sup>7</sup> This is in stark contrast to Thomas Alfield's *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581* and Robert Persons's *An epistle of the persecution of Catholickes in Englande* which were both printed in 1582 and depicted Campion and other Catholics as dying for religion only.<sup>8</sup> The political shaping of the narrative continued across the centuries and was particularly acute in the years preceding and following the emancipation of Catholics in England in 1829.<sup>9</sup> For example, the Catholic historian John Milner referred to the Protestant 'pretended martyrs' contained in the 'ponderous folio of Fox's falsehoods' and compared them with the 'genuine and edifying *Memoirs of Missionary Priests and other Catholics*'.<sup>10</sup> In opposition, the Protestant historian Sharon Turner interpreted 'the history and projects of Pius V' as the 'resolution to exterminate the Protestant Reformation by force, and therefore by human bloodshed... which could not but

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<sup>7</sup> Anon., *An advertisement and defence for trueth against her backbiters and specially against the whispring fauourers, and colourers of Campions, and the rest of his confederats treasons. 1581. God saue the Queene* (London, Christopher Barker, 1581), Anon. [W. Elderton], *A triumph for true subiects, and a terroure vnto al traitours: by the example of the late death of Edmund Campion, Ralphe Sherwin, and Thomas Bryan, Iesuites and seminarie priestes: who suffered at Tyburne, on Friday the first daye of December. anno Domini. 1581* (London, Richard Iones, dwellinge ouer agaynst the Faulcon, neare Holburne Bridge., anno. 1581).

<sup>8</sup> T. Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581* Observed and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat wherunto is annexed certayne verses made by sundrie persons ([London, R. Rowlands or Verstegan], 1582), R. Persons, *An epistle of the persecution of Catholickes in Englande Translated ovvt of frenche* (Imprynted at Douay in Artois [i.e. Rouen, Fr. Parsons' Press], 1582).

<sup>9</sup> Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829.

<sup>10</sup> J. Milner, *The End of Religious Controversy, in a Friendly Correspondence Between a Religious Society of Protestants and a Roman Catholic Divine*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London, Keating, Brown & Co., 1819), p. 67, p. 68.

create a character like that which we call Satanic'.<sup>11</sup> In the decades that followed the study of the English Catholic martyrs was pushed to the fringes of historical research as Protestantism was hailed as a triumph in England. It was hard to reconcile the fact that people were willing to die in opposition to Protestantism with this interpretation and, as Anne Dillon has reminded us, 'The "winners" of a battle always have the privilege of writing the official history of events'.<sup>12</sup>

In the face of the continued accusation that the martyrs were in fact traitors, English Catholic historians swept aside interpretations that challenged the notion that Catholics had died only for religion. John Hungerford Pollen and Philip Hughes argued that priests were not permitted to meddle in politics and should be considered separately from the political designs of the papacy, thus protecting the Catholic martyrs from the accusation of treason.<sup>13</sup> John Aveling, Christopher Haigh and Patrick McGrath focused on the English mission's pastoral objectives, a tendency that has arguably obscured the political objectives of some of the priests and, to some extent, distorted the intention of the mission.<sup>14</sup> Michael Carrafiello has argued that sixteenth-century Catholics should not be judged by twentieth-century standards.<sup>15</sup> However, Thomas McCoog has claimed that 'Carrafiello confused traditional Jesuit spiritual language with political aspirations' and thus misinterpreted Robert Persons's goals.<sup>16</sup> The militaristic language of the Jesuit writers should not, according to McCoog, be understood as a call to physical arms. Trying to disentangle the religious motivations from the political ones of particular martyrs may be a futile exercise.

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<sup>11</sup> S. Turner, *The History of the Reigns of Edward the Sixth, Mary, and Elizabeth*, Volume 2, (London, Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, 1835), p. 172.

<sup>12</sup> A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535 – 1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> J. H. Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth: Their Politics, Civil Life and Government 1558-80* (London, Longman, 1920), P. Hughes, *Rome and the Catholic Reformation in England* (London, Macmillan, 1942).

<sup>14</sup> J. Aveling, *Northern Catholics: The Catholic Recusants of the North Riding of Yorkshire, 1558-1790* (London, 1966), J. Aveling, *The Handle and the Axe: The Catholic Recusants in England from Reformation to Emancipation* (London, Blond and Briggs, 1976), C. Haigh, *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), C. Haigh, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, Macmillan, 1984), P. McGrath, *Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I* (London, Blandford Press, 1967).

<sup>15</sup> M. L. Carrafiello, *Robert Parsons and English Catholicism, 1580 -1610* (London, Associated University Presses, 1998), p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> T. McCoog, *"And Touching our Society": Fashioning Jesuit Identity in Elizabethan England* (Toronto, PIMS, 2013), p. 12.

Martyrdom, like treason, was constructed by those who witnessed and circulated accounts of it. Alongside this the act of martyrdom helped to construct and cement religious identities. As Anne Dillon has shown, martyrological texts and manuscripts were compiled through active choices regarding what was recorded and transmitted and the editing of the text as it was copied and circulated tells us about what the wider Catholic community considered important about the death of one of their members.<sup>17</sup> The construction of an account of martyrdom provides a glimpse into the Catholic construction of its own identity. Alex Walsham has maintained that the persecution of Catholics and the hostility of the regime ‘catalysed processes of religious identity formation and facilitated tendencies that were slower to emerge in territories where the Church was buttressed by the strong arm of the state’.<sup>18</sup> The martyrs were not just witnesses to the faith but became symbolic of it and the wider community. It is therefore significant that the martyrdom accounts and letters comforting prospective martyrs placed their fate in an eschatological framework. Investigating the construction of English Catholic martyrs as eschatological warriors allows us to understand how the wider Catholic community understood its own eschatological identity and the depth of the True Church versus False Church debate.

In arguing that Catholic martyrs were represented as eschatological agents, this chapter will challenge Sarah Covington’s claim that ‘by the time of Elizabeth, the association of Catholicism with treason, and of the state with the true religion, had become so powerful that few would have dissented greatly from the surge of crowd sentiments [at executions]’.<sup>19</sup> The placing of a Catholic martyr’s death in an eschatological framework, particularly in printed accounts, presented a direct challenge to the state and the notion of Protestantism as the true religion. Investigating Catholic eschatological understanding of contemporary martyrdom rebalances the picture of a triumphant Protestant state executing traitors. However, this should not undermine the utility of the martyrological reports and the actual martyrdoms’ power as polemic. Susannah Brietz Monta has shown that martyrology was a ‘key genre through which early modern writers grappled with religious change and conflict’ and that ‘To be a martyrologist was also to be a polemicist; a martyr’s biography in early modern England [was]

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<sup>17</sup> A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535 – 1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002).

<sup>18</sup> A. Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014), p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> S. Covington, *The Trial of Martyrdom, Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame, 2003), p. 179.

essentially dialogical, not just encomiastic'.<sup>20</sup> The praise was practical and differentiated between a true and false martyr and defied the state. Eschatology in these accounts thus implied divine support for Catholicism as well as maintaining the martyr's reputation. This supports Monta's assessment that 'conflicts between Protestant and Catholic martyrological writing helped to produce, not merely to record religious divisions'.<sup>21</sup> Long after the martyrs' execution they had agency in challenging the Protestant regime. Their memory and how it was reported provided an argument against the status quo and Protestantism.

### **Elizabethan Catholic Martyrdoms**

The first Catholic martyrdoms in Elizabeth's reign were arguably those of the Northern Rebels. The Northern Rebellion was led by the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland who, together with their followers, stormed Durham Cathedral on 14 November 1569. They destroyed the Protestant books and celebrated Catholic mass while the men that joined them in the following days marched under the banner of the Five Wounds of Christ. From the beginning the Northern Rebellion was styled by the rebels themselves as a rising to restore the faith and the rights of the loyal Catholic nobility.<sup>22</sup> The executions of those who had taken part in the rising of the North was swiftly followed by that of John Felton who nailed a copy of the Bull *Regnans in excelsis* to the Bishop of London's palace on 25 May 1570. These two cases – of Felton and the 1569 rebels – expose how closely religion and the problem of treason were entwined. Nevertheless, Richard Bristow considered both Felton and the Northern Rebels as martyrs.<sup>23</sup> It was claimed that both Felton and the Northern Rebels were depicted and described as martyrs at the English College Rome. Anthony Munday recalled how during his visit to the college in 1579, the story of Felton was read to the students during dinner as an exemplar while one fresco at the English College celebrated the Northern Rebels as martyrs.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless,

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<sup>20</sup> S. Brietz Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 1, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> London, British Library, Harley 6990 fols. 89r – 89v. (Proclamation of the Earls of Northumberland & Westmorland to the Earl of Derby, 28 November 1569), F. Drake, *Eboracum: or, the history and antiquities of the City of York: Illustrated with Copper Plates* (London, Bower, 1736), p. 129.

<sup>23</sup> R. Bristow, *A briefe treatise of diverse plaine and sure wayes to finde out the truthe in this doubtful and dangerous time of heresie conteyning sundry worthy motives unto the Catholike faith, or considerations to move a man to beleve the Catholikes, and not the Heretikes. Sette out by Richard Bristow priest, licentiat in divinitie* (Antwerp, John Fowler, 1574), fol. 73r.

<sup>24</sup> A. Munday, *The English Romaine lyfe Discovering: the liues of the Englishmen at Roome: the orders of the English seminarie: the dissention betweene the Englishmen and the Welshmen: the banishing of the Englishmen out of Roome: the Popes sending for them againe: a reporte of many of the paltrie reliques in Roome: ther vautes under the grounde: their holy pilgrimages: and a number other matters, worthy to be read and regarded of every*

Felton and the Northern Rebels were not commonly thought of as the first Catholic martyrs. Their overt political motives had barred them from the crown of martyrdom in some people's opinion from the 1560s to the present day. Instead the missionary priest Cuthbert Mayne, who was executed in Launceston on 30 November 1577, was accorded this title. Catholics claimed that Mayne was executed because he was a missionary priest. This is in contradiction with the Protestant authorities' argument that Mayne was as a traitor because of his possession of the Bull *Regnans in excelsis* amongst his personal papers. The difficulty in disentangling religious and political motivations and thus deciding who is considered a martyr has persisted in historiographical perceptions. With regards to the Rising, not only the martyrs themselves but their motivations have come under question. In 1979 Geoffrey Elton advanced the thesis that the Northern Rising was the result of court factions and thus distanced religion, and therefore martyrdom, from the revolt.<sup>25</sup> This has since been disputed and Diana Newton has argued that feudal duty was an unlikely cause of the revolt and has argued that the events of 1569 must at least in part be re-interpreted as a popular religious rising.<sup>26</sup> Krista Kesserling has convincingly argued that religion was a filter through which other grievances were understood and communicated and thus should be taken seriously as a motivation.<sup>27</sup> Downplaying the religious motivation of the Rebels continues to deny the Rebels' martyrdom highlighting how their deaths continue to be controversial. Whether considered martyrs or not these events were significant for the Catholic cause in England. The rising and the bull of excommunication directed the authorities' attention more closely to Catholic subjects and in the minds of some, tied Catholicism to treason.

Anti-Catholic, and in particular, treason legislation slowly grew in severity and scope throughout Elizabeth's reign. The immediate impact of the Northern Rebellion of 1569 was the introduction of 'An Acte whereby certayne Offences be made Treason' in 1571, which restored the provisions of the 1534 Treason Act.<sup>28</sup> It made the intention to harm the queen or to instigate

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one. There unto is added, the cruell tyranny, used on an English man at Roome, his Christian suffering, and notable martirdome, for the Gospell of Jesus Christe, in anno. 1581. Written by A.M. sometime the Popes scholler in the seminarie among them. Seene and allowed (London, John Charlewoode, for Nicholas Ling, dwelling in Paules Church-yarde, at the signe of the Maremaide, 1582), p. 27, Giovanni Battista Cavalieri, *Ecclesiae Anglicae Trophea* (Rome, 1584), plate 30.

<sup>25</sup> G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1969), *passim*.

<sup>26</sup> D. Newton, *North East England, 1569 – 1625: Governance, Culture and Identity* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2006), p. 119, p. 122.

<sup>27</sup> K. J. Kesserling, *The Northern Rising of 1569: Faith, Politics, and Protest in Elizabethan England* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> 13 Eliz.1 c.1.

war against her, or to incite others to war against her, an act of high treason. It became high treason to say or to publish that the Queen was a heretic, tyrant or usurper and made discussing the succession to the throne a capital crime. In tandem with this, the act ‘Against Bulls from Rome’, punished with high treason those who published papal bulls and Catholic priests and their converts.<sup>29</sup> The enforcement of these acts was relatively mild compared to what would follow in subsequent decades as anti-Catholic statutes were slowly enlarged and embellished in reaction to real and perceived threats. The 1581 act ‘Against Reconciliation to Rome’ was a response to the arrival of Jesuits and missionary priests and made it treason to reconcile Catholics or to convert people to the Catholic faith.<sup>30</sup> The act ‘Against Jesuits and Seminary Priests’ went further still, making it high treason to be a Catholic priest.<sup>31</sup> After 1588 these acts were enforced with more vigour and there was a spike in the number of martyrdoms. Throughout Elizabeth’s reign the enlargement of the scope of treason was accompanied by an oath of allegiance to the monarch that in effect meant one had to either deny one’s faith or face a charge of rebellion and sedition. These Acts reflected a realization that Catholicism was not going to wither away as the Marian priests aged and died. They testify to the perceived vibrancy of early modern English Catholicism. In response to the expansion of treason legislation Catholicism had to develop a way of sustaining the faithful under an ever increasing threat of persecution and ordinary Catholics needed a means of understanding the changing religious environment. The rest of this chapter will develop the idea that eschatology, apocalypticism and martyrdom produced a circular argument. The Apocalypse predicted that Antichrist and the Whore would persecute and martyr the saints with growing ferocity as the world neared the End.<sup>32</sup> Those who persecuted and killed revealed their eschatological identities and in turn confirmed that the faithful had to suffer. Those embarking on the English mission understood their role eschatologically and viewed themselves as eschatological agents.

### **Mission, Apocalyptic Imagery and Eschatological Context**

As early as 1573 the persecutions in England were placed in the timeline of the events of the Apocalypse and Protestants were threatened with God’s vengeance. This in turn reconfirmed the identities of Protestants as the enemies of God and Catholics as his witnesses. A work by

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<sup>29</sup> 13 Eliz. 1 c. 2.

<sup>30</sup> 23 Eliz. 1 c. 1.

<sup>31</sup> 27 Eliz. 1 c.2.

<sup>32</sup> Apocalypse 6:9 – 11, Apocalypse 13:7 – 8, Apocalypse 17:6, Apocalypse 20:4.

Thomas More was edited and printed by the former fellow of New College, Oxford, and Catholic exile John Fowler in 1573 which compared English Catholics to the inhabitants of an apocalyptic Jerusalem.<sup>33</sup> More claimed that ‘(as our Savior prophecied of the people of Jerusalem) many wish among us already before the peril to come, that the mountains would overhelme them, or the valies open, and swallow them up and cover them’.<sup>34</sup> The expression ‘the mountains would overhelme them, or the valies open, and swallow them up and cover them’ was an allusion to the end of the sixth chapter of the Apocalypse and placed England during the period of the opening of the seven seals.<sup>35</sup> This section of the Apocalypse prophesied that

the kings of the earth, & princes, and tribunes, and riche, and the strong, and every bond-man, and freee-man hid them selves in the dennes and the rocks of the mountains. And they say to the mountains and the rockes: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lambe: because the great day of their wrath is come.<sup>36</sup>

More, endorsed by Fowler, thus set the tribulations of English Catholics in an immediate eschatological context. Chapter six of the Apocalypse became significant for early modern English Catholic martyrs because it was after the fifth seal was opened that John viewed the martyrs under the altar who called on God to avenge their blood. The ‘great day of their wrath’ to which More referred was when God would exact revenge on ‘the kings of the earth & princes’ for slaying his witnesses. The marginal note in the *Dialogue of Comfort* directed the reader to Luke 23 which narrated the unjust judgement of Christ by the people of Jerusalem and the crucifixion. Luke reported how, prior to his martyrdom

Jesus turning to them, said, Daughters of Hierusalem, weepe not upon me, but weepe upon yourselves, and upon your children. For behold the daies shal come, wherein they wil say, Blessed are the barren, and the

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<sup>33</sup> Fowler is discussed in chapter 1, p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> T. More, *A dialogue of cumfort against tribulation, made by the right vertuous, wise and learned man, Sir Thomas More, sometime L. Chancellor of England, which he wrote in the Tower of London, An. 1534. and entituled thus: A dialogue of cumfort against tribulation, made by an Hungarian in Latin, and translated out of Latin into French, [and] out of French into English* (Antwerp, John Fowler, 1573), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Apocalypse 6:1 – 17.

<sup>36</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), pp. 710 – 711.



wombes that have not borne... Then shal they begin to say to the mountains, Fal upon us: and to the hilles, cover us.<sup>37</sup>

More and Fowler conveyed the view that England was a fallen Jerusalem certain to feel God's wrath during the events of the End. The printing of the text in 1573 is interesting and may have been done with the arrival of the first missionary priests, a year later, in mind. News of the 1571 legislation and the English authorities' reaction to the Bull must have travelled to Fowler on the Continent and formed the backdrop to his decision to reprint More's *Dialogue of Comfort*. Fowler may have expected the priests to be entering a hostile situation and possible martyrdom and thought that the prophecies of Christ might restrain persecution. Fowler's printing of the text in 1573 and the fact that More placed the tribulations Catholics experienced in an apocalyptic timeline, 'before the peril to come', set the arrival of the missionary priests in an eschatological framework and presented them as witnesses to the Lord who would be avenged.

The English College at Rome, often referred to as a training ground for martyrs, also set the English mission and martyrdom in an eschatological and apocalyptic context. For example the picture under which missionaries took their vows had apocalyptic and eschatological connotations.<sup>38</sup> Painted by the Tuscan artist Durante Alberti in 1580 following the orders from the Apostolic Visitation of June 1576, the text in the banner, the College motto, reads *Ignem veni mittere in terram* – I have come to bring fire to earth – and was a direct quotation of Luke 12:49. This is significant as chapter 12 of Luke reported how Jesus 'prepareth his Disciples against persecutions to come upon them at their publishing of his doctrines'<sup>39</sup> and warned Christians to 'seeke first the kingdom of God'<sup>40</sup> for 'Blessed are those servants, whom when the Lord commeth, he shal finde watching'.<sup>41</sup> The quotation from this chapter in the College motto and within the most prominent image in the College thus set the mission in an apocalyptic context because Luke 12 was concerned with warning Christ's followers to remain steadfast because of the coming Judgment. The chapter insisted on open confession of the faith and separation from heretics and stressed how one's actions upon earth will procure 'mercie

<sup>37</sup> Luke 23:28 – 31, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 208.

<sup>38</sup> See fig. 3, Durante Alberti, 'The Martyr's Picture' (1583).

<sup>39</sup> Luke Chapter XII, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 173.

<sup>40</sup> Luke 12:31, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 175.

<sup>41</sup> Luke 12:37, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 175.

for him at the day of judgement'.<sup>42</sup> The notion of coming to bring fire to earth seems to allude to events in the Apocalypse as it is after fire is cast on earth that the seven trumpets are blown.<sup>43</sup> It is not surprising that we find the trope of fire on the earth in the Apocalypse but it may be important that within the first twenty lines of the eighth chapter the idea of bringing fire to the earth appeared and was expanded upon twice. The founder of the College, William Allen, and the College students would have been alert to these scriptural references, particularly in the post-Reformation context. The fact that the specific choice of phrase chosen as the English College motto appeared in two separate apocalyptic and eschatological chapters of the Bible is significant.

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<sup>42</sup> Annotations to Chapter XII, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 177.

<sup>43</sup> Apocalypse 8:5, Apocalypse 8:7.



Fig. 3, Durante Alberti, 'The Martyrs Picture', 1583.

The apocalypticism of the painting hung above the altar at the English College is underscored by the combination of the motto with a depiction of the holy Trinity coming out of the clouds towards the earth. This seems to direct the viewer to the first chapter of the Apocalypse, which instructed the reader that in the End the Lord will 'commeth with the

Cloudes'.<sup>44</sup> The notion of coming in the clouds to Judgment was a strong Biblical theme and appeared in the books of Luke, Mark, Mathew and the Apocalypse of John.<sup>45</sup> The apocalypticism of the painting is strengthened by the fact that Alberti chose to depict Christ returning as a martyr because it is in Apocalypse I that Jesus's prophesised return was described in such terms.<sup>46</sup> These two artistic references suggest that Alberti has used Apocalypse chapter one as the basis of his depiction of Christ in this painting.

The martyrdom of Christ was linked to the Apocalypse as the essence of the Christian message is that it is through this witness and martyrdom that salvation will be gained at the General Judgment. The English College augmented this teaching with the notion that it was through the missionaries' martyrdoms that their own salvation and the salvation of England would be gained. The redemptive blood dripping from Christ's wounds onto a map of England underlined this connection and suggested that their personal martyrdoms were the ultimate *imitatio Christi*. Another noteworthy apocalyptic aspect of this image is that Christ is depicted returning with his leg resting on an orb. It was common artistic practice when depicting Judgment Day during this and previous eras to portray Christ with his feet on an orb.<sup>47</sup> The orb represented both his majesty and triumph over the world and therefore although Christ is shown returning as a martyr the artist indicates that this martyr is returning in glory. Although there is an absence of the usual artistic apocalyptic signifiers in the image such as trumpets, a left and right division of figures and Mary to Christ's right and John the Baptist on Christ's left, the fusion of text and image, the choice of depiction – the Trinity coming in the clouds, palm leaves, Christ's redemptive blood, his resting on an orb – is suggestive. The placement of the picture above the altar at the English College combined with the intended audience of missionaries who could expect martyrdom would set the mission and the martyrdoms in an apocalyptic and eschatological perspective.

The fresco cycle depicting English martyrs painted in 1583 by Nicolo Circignani at the English College in Rome was apocalyptic and eschatological and thus surrounded the English

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<sup>44</sup> Apocalypse 1: 7, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 698.

<sup>45</sup> Luke 21:27, Mark 14:62, Mathew 24:29, Apocalypse 1:7.

<sup>46</sup> Apocalypse 1:5 – 8, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 698.

<sup>47</sup> Hieronymus Bosch, 'The Last Judgement', c.1500, Hans Memling, 'The Last Judgment', 1467 – 1471, Jean Cousin the Younger, 'The Last Judgement', c. 1560 – 89, Giorgio Vasari, 'The Last Judgement', 1572 – 79.

mission with the aura of eschatological apocalypticism. Although none of the frescos are extant Giovanni Battista de'Cavallieri produced engravings of the frescos in 1584 which transmitted these images around Catholic Europe. What is notable within the engravings is that it is only when we get to recent events and persecution in England that birds appear in the images. For example, in the depiction of the 'Apprehension of Catholics in England' two vultures are perched on the roof.<sup>48</sup> In the scene of the 'Nocturnal Inquisition' two menacing birds are shown flying by the church steeple.<sup>49</sup> In the picture of the 'Torments inflicted' vultures are once again in the foreground.<sup>50</sup> This is noteworthy as chapter eighteen of the Apocalypse described how Babylon had 'become the habitation of ... every uncleane and hateful bird'.<sup>51</sup> This may be suggestive of where the frescos placed England in the apocalyptic timeline, as it is after Babylon had been drunk with the blood of the saints and fallen that the city became the habitation of 'every uncleane and hateful bird'. The apocalypticism of the frescos, and Catholicism's role in England, were further emphasised by the positioning and visual imagery of Saint George. In the image St George slays a dragon, which in the context of early modern England and of the other frescoes, could have alluded to the Antichrist.<sup>52</sup> The connection between St George and the destruction of Antichrist was strong because St George was the counterpart of St Margaret, who was typological of the 'Woman Clothed in the Sun'. As we shall see, some early modern English Catholics viewed their church as in the wilderness and perceived the apocalyptic text describing the 'Woman Clothed in the Sun' as applying to them. The inclusion of St. George slaying the dragon may therefore be more than a case of the inclusion of England's national saint. Dillon has argued that 'the position of the fresco of Saint George at the midpoint in the whole cycle had both an historical and a more domestic significance' and brought with it allusions of the slaying of the beast of the Antichrist.<sup>53</sup> The location of this image at the mid-point of the fresco cycle put the apocalypticism of the later images depicting contemporary events and 'uncleane and hateful birds' into sharper focus. The frescos were to be 'read' in sequence and displayed the story of Catholicism and Catholic martyrdoms in England from the Apostles to the present day. The carefully constructed fresco cycle at the English College Rome and Cavallieri's 1584 engravings of them promoted an

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<sup>48</sup> See Fig. 4, Cavalieri G. B., *Ecclesiae Anglicae Trophea* (Rome, 1584), p. 72.

<sup>49</sup> See Fig. 5, *ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>50</sup> See Fig. 6, *ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>51</sup> Apocalypse 18:1-3, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 732.

<sup>52</sup> See Fig. 7, Cavalieri G. B., *Ecclesiae Anglicae Trophea* (Rome, 1584), p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535 – 1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), p. 195.

apocalyptic and eschatological interpretation of the English mission itself. The paintings in the English College were images of an eschatological vocation. Students were not just training to be priests but had a vocation for martyrdom which was a necessary part of apocalyptic history.



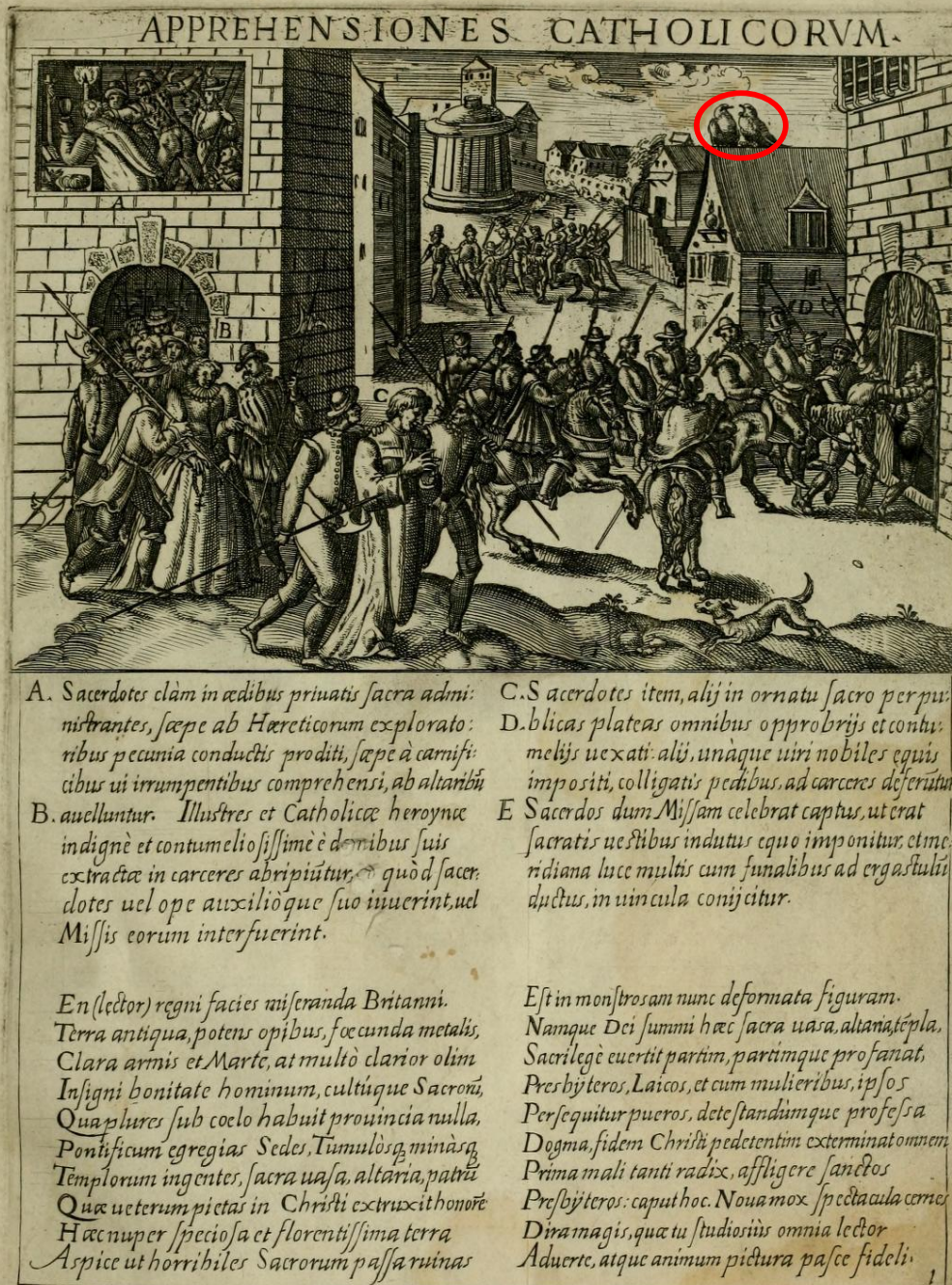


Fig.4.





A. Intempesta nocte, lictores Catholicorum domos  
perrumpunt.  
B. Viros, Foeminas, Pueros, è lectis fugant.  
C. Effringunt armaria, cistas, capsulas: nec so-  
lum in calices, libros, cruces, et si quid inueniunt  
rei Ecclesiasticæ, rapaciter inuolant, uerum

etiam aurum, argentum, pecuniam omnem  
obiter inuentam, tanquam publici quidam  
latrones, prædantur et auferunt.  
E. Ianuæ domorum per uim effractæ.  
F. Domini et domestici in carceres abducti.

Quæ modo sacrilegè patrata notauimus, illa,  
Luce palam, et medio fiunt inmania sole.  
Nunc tenebrarum actus, nocturnæque furta sequuntur.  
Nam dum per latas animantia cœlera terras  
Nocte intempesta placido correpta sopore  
Membra ministerijs recreant lassata diurnis,  
Tum uerò in primis spolijs intenta futuris  
Excubat, et prædas animo designat auaro  
Carnificum scelerata cohors: tum tecta piorum  
Aggreditur, quæ mox nisi sponte ultroque pateant,

Fit uia ui, rumpitque oclusas machina portas,  
Vi quondam hostiles Aries balistæque muros.  
Nec mora, persuadunt secreta cubilia, cunctas  
Excutiunt latebras, cistas, capsasque refringunt,  
Diripiuntque sacras uestes, calicesque, crucesque.  
Et simul occurrens signata pecunia, uel non  
Signata, armillæ, pretiosa monilia, torques,  
Vi sacra, præque sacris, iure eripiuntur eodem.  
Denique ad extremum (Ius ô mirabile) falsi  
Coniiciunt ueros dominos in uincula furcs.

Fig. 5.



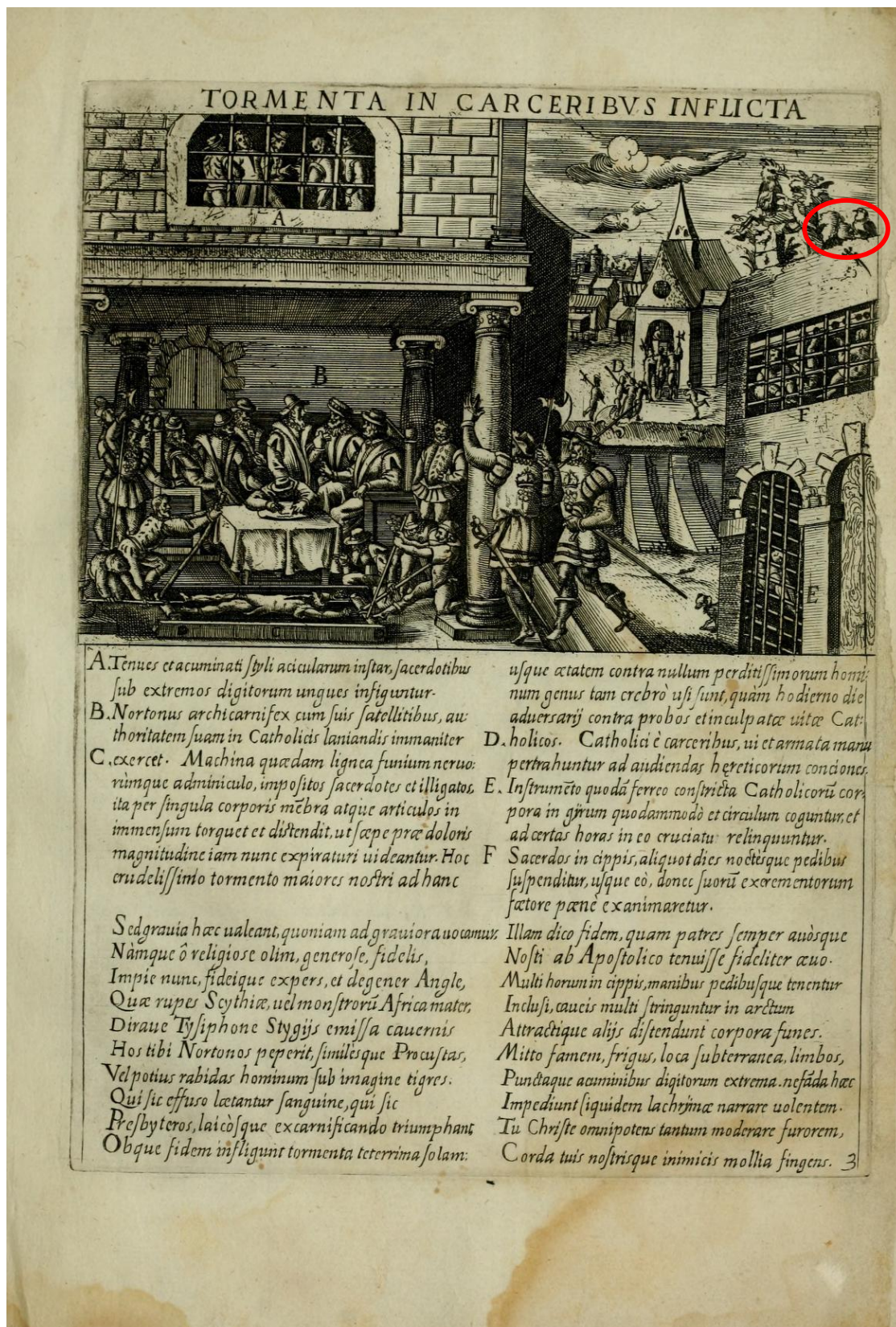


Fig. 6.





Fig. 7.

The reference to palm leaves in both contemporary visual and textual sources relating to Catholic martyrs reveals the influence of the Apocalypse on ideas about those who sacrificed themselves for the faith. It was in Apocalypse chapter 7 that John claimed to have seen ‘a great multitude... standing before the throne, and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palmes in their hands’.<sup>54</sup> The marginal note instructed that those receiving the palm were ‘the elect of the Gentiles’ and that the ‘Boughes of the palme tree be tokens of triumph and victorie’.<sup>55</sup> The Apocalypse characterised death for the True faith as victory and thus created an apocalyptic agency in the form of militant passivity. The image above the altar at the English College Rome underscored the link between martyrdom, England, and salvation at Judgment by the angels of the Lord offering palm leaves to two English martyrs, St. Thomas of Canterbury and St. Edmund, King of East Anglia.<sup>56</sup> The same iconographical fashioning appeared in Father Garnet’s report of the Martyrs of 1592 and 1593 when Garnet declared that ‘We have just heard of another priest and Martyr, though we do not know his name yet, who won his palm at Newcastle’.<sup>57</sup> Garnet emphasised the active passivity in the notion that the priest had ‘won his palm’ rather than it being given or bestowed. Similarly, the Elizabethan scribe Peter Mowle explained in the margins of the copy he made of ‘Sartaine most holosome meditations’ the meaning of the iconography when he claimed that ‘The saintes arrayed in white in token of innocencie of life carrying in their hands Palmes of victorie in Signe their conquests of ye enemeies of their Sallvation ye world. ye fleshe. & ye Devill’.<sup>58</sup> Once again the language of conquest is used when martyrdom is described which reinforces the idea of militant passivity. Suffering was a tactic of the cosmic war between good and evil. It shaped suffering at the hands of persecutors into an active role and provided the martyr with another form of agency.

<sup>54</sup> Apocalypse 7:9, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 713.

<sup>55</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 713.

<sup>56</sup> See Fig.3.

<sup>57</sup> J. H. Pollen (ed.), *Unpublished documents relating to the English martyrs*, Catholic Record Society, Vol. I, 1584 – 1603 (London, J. Whitehead & Son, 1908), p. 231.

<sup>58</sup> New Haven, Yale University Beinecke Library, Osborn a6, fol. 16r (P. Mowle, *Sartaine most holosome meditations verrey meete to bee dylie considered*, 1595).

### **Edmund Campion and Thomas Alfield's True Report**

This apocalyptic imagery and eschatological language was translated into action. The first alumnus of the English College Rome to be martyred, Ralph Sherwin, accompanied the 1580 mission to England and died alongside Edmund Campion at Tyburn. The execution of the Jesuit missionary priest Edmund Campion on 1 December 1581 reverberated across Europe. Campion was well known for his piety and learning and had served as a novice in Brunn in Moravia and Prague in Bohemia. Campion was later a teacher of rhetoric and Latin in Prague and produced Latin dramas, one of which was performed at the Imperial court in 1577. Campion crossed into England and arrived in London on 24 June 1580 to begin preaching until his capture at Lyford Grange on 15 July 1581. Following torture, disputations and trial Campion was hung drawn and quartered alongside fellow Catholic priests Ralph Sherwin and Alexander Briant. News of the executions spread swiftly in manuscript and a printed account by the Catholic priest and later martyr, Thomas Alfield. The report is significant for understanding early modern Catholic conceptions of martyrdom, and the Catholic community as a whole which the martyrs represented, because Campion was used as an exemplar. It is thus significant that Alfield located martyrdom, and specifically Campion's martyrdom, in an immediate apocalyptic and eschatological context by quoting Apocalypse chapter seven on the title page of *A True Report*.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> See Fig. 8: T. Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Wherunto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons* ([London, R. Rowlands or Verstegan], 1582), Title Page, Gerard Kilroy has recently published an in depth study of Edmund Campion and Elizabethan Catholicism, see: G. Kilroy, *Edmund Campion: Memory and Transcription* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005).

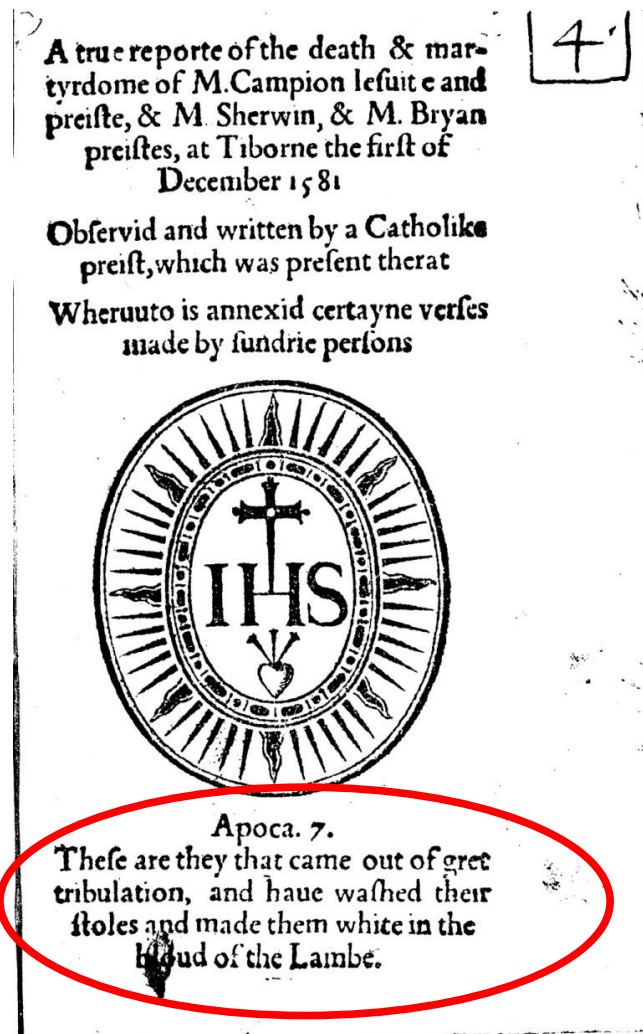


Fig. 8.

Beginning the text with an apocalyptic quotation on the title page directed the reader to interpret what was written and contemporary events apocalyptically. It left no space for misinterpretation and clarified the apocalyptic and eschatological role of Catholic martyrs. The exact quotation Alfield used was taken from what was described in the Douai-Rheims Bible marginal notes as 'The Epistle for many Martyrs'.<sup>60</sup> This epistle would have been particularly apposite in 1581 as the *Act to retain the Queen's Majesty subjects in their obedience* was passed, making it high treason to reconcile anyone or be reconciled to the Church of Rome.<sup>61</sup> This thus began a steady growth in the number of English Catholic martyrs and although Campion, along with thirteen fellow priests and other persons, was indicted and convicted under the 1352 Statute of Treasons, the *Act to retain* was to have a considerable impact on both the context in which the Catholic mission was undertaken and the missionaries' outlook. This

<sup>60</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 721.

<sup>61</sup> 23 Eliz. c.1.

would also make the reference to chapter seven of the Apocalypse more apt as it is in this section that ‘The earth is to be punished... they are commaunded to save them that are signed in their foreheads... which are described and numbered both of the Jewes and Gentiles. blessing God.. Of them that were clothed in white stoles or long robes’.<sup>62</sup> The apocalyptic quotation was placed directly under the emblem of the Society of Jesus which may indicate how the Society perceived itself and the mission. This visual proximity transmitted the idea that there was a connection. In Catholic eyes the earth, and certainly England, were being punished by God while the command in Apocalypse 7 was being followed by the mission.

Alfield described how through Campion’s martyrdom the Church had lost ‘a souldier against Babylon,’ and therefore placed Catholic martyrs in an apocalyptic and eschatological battle against the embodiment of evil.<sup>63</sup> Campion exemplified the spiritual warrior against the corrupt Whore of Babylon prophesied in Apocalypse chapter 17.<sup>64</sup> John’s revelation taught that the war over souls and salvation might be lengthy and bloody but victory was predetermined in the True Church’s favour. Martyrdom was a physical loss but a spiritual gain for the Church and Christ would reward those slain for his faith. Alfield characterised the confidence of the Catholics when he declared that ‘we must win, our lord himself doth fight/ the Cananites shal be expulsd from the land’.<sup>65</sup> The reference to the Canaanites is illuminating.<sup>66</sup> The cursing of Canaan was considered a paradigm of how God used human agents to deliver retribution on those who had sinned. However, in early modern England the soldiers of God would now vanquish the enemy with the pen and spiritual conversion and conquest would be achieved with the blood of God’s soldiers rather than his enemies. Alfield made it clear that

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<sup>62</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 721.

<sup>63</sup> T. Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Wherunto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons* ([London, R. Rowlands or Verstegan], 1582), sig. F1v.

<sup>64</sup> That Elizabeth was considered to be Jezebel see chapter 4, pp. 124 – 161.

<sup>65</sup> T. Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Wherunto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons* ([London, R. Rowlands or Verstegan], 1582), sig. F.3r.

<sup>66</sup> In Deuteronomy the Bible described the descendants of Canaan as a race which multiplied enormously procuring great wealth through conflict and commerce with unabated success until their abominations and idolatries swelled to the point that God decided to punish them. As punishment God delivered the Canaanites into the hands of the Israelites and demanded that they expel them from their land. The Israelites only partly expelled the Canaanites and in return received their own chastisement from God who permitted some to remain to test the Israelites’ faith.

God knows it is not by force nor might  
 not are nor warlike band  
 Not shield & spear, not dint of sword  
 that must convert the land  
 It is the blood by martirs shed  
 it is that noble traine  
 That fight with word & not with sword  
 and Christ their captaine.<sup>67</sup>

The fight was to be one of militant passivity in the face of death. The idea of a ‘warlike band’ with Christ as their captain may be an allusion to the Jesuit Two Standards.<sup>68</sup> In the *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius of Loyola had developed the idea of people choosing between the teachings of Jesus, and gathering under his flag, or the way of the world, and gathering under the banner of Satan.<sup>69</sup> It may also allude to the eschatological battle believed to be ongoing throughout history between the forces of God and the forces of Satan or Antichrist. As Alfield articulated, it was through martyrdom and *imitatio Christi* that the eschatological battle for salvation was to be won. Early modern Catholic martyrdom was thus not passive suffering but a form of eschatological agency.

The martyrs’ dismembered bodies and Christ’s crucifixion were a call to arms. The *True Report* argued that

his quarters hong on every gate do showe  
 his doctrine found through countries far & neare

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<sup>67</sup> T. Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Wherunto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons* ([London, R. Rowlands or Verstegan], 1582), sig. Gv.

<sup>68</sup> The Two Standards are discussed in chapter 2, p. 68.

<sup>69</sup> In the early modern period Ignatius’s *Spiritual exercises* circulated in Latin and Spanish but it was not until 1951 that an English translation was made from Ignatius’s autographed manuscripts, see: ‘Second Week, Fourth Day, 136 – 149’, L. J. Puhl, S. J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph* (Chicago, Loyola Press, 1951).



this head set up so high doth call for mo[r]e  
 to fight which he endured here  
 the faith thus planted thus restored must be  
 take up thy crosse saith Christ and follow me.<sup>70</sup>

Alfield felt that the martyr, especially after death, was actively transmitting True religion. The martyr's death was considered by Alfield to be a fight. This is counter to the general notion that martyrdom was submission to the laws of the regime as the executioner drew the state's authority onto the martyr's flesh. Christ's soldiers would be replenished and martyrdom would not reduce their ranks. Alfield instructed Catholics to

rejoyce thou earth thou hast a warlike bande  
 for our good Lord in martial order set  
 by life and death this quarrel to beginne  
 to vanquish falsehood, Satan, hell and sinne  
 Although a worthy Champion of your trayne  
 were slayne of late  
 and yet not vanquished  
 into his place another stept againe  
 who[m] Christs spouse our co[m]mon nurse hath bred  
 lament not then, for there are in his rome  
 as good as he, expecting martirdome.<sup>71</sup>

The conquering of 'falsehood, Satan, hell and sinne' was to be at the hands of human agents bred by the Church. Throughout Alfield's poem the martyrs are active. They are a 'war like band' engaged in a battle between good and evil begun by the death of Christ. Alfield claimed that into the martyrs place another soldier would step which suggests that death was the martyr's decision and not the state's. Alfield considered Catholic martyrs active eschatological

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<sup>70</sup> T. Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Wherunto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons* ([London, R. Rowlands or Verstegan], 1582), sig. F.3r.

<sup>71</sup> T. Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Wherunto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons* ([London, R. Rowlands or Verstegan], 1582), sig. F.2r – F.2v.



agents to the extent that even the death penalty became their choice rather than a sentence being imposed upon them.

However, it was not considered solely the martyr's choice but rather a gift bestowed by God on his saints. In a poem following his account of the martyrdom of Edmund Campion Alfield claimed that

Your sentence wrong pronounced of him here,  
 exemptes him from the judgments for to come,  
 O happy he that is not judged there,  
 God graunt me too to have an earthly dome,  
 your witness false and lewdly taken in,  
 doth cause he is not now accusd of sin.<sup>72</sup>

Martyrdom was understood as a gift from God because it was believed that the martyr would be exempted from God's judgement and human judgement was short and less painful in comparison. It was a comforting and encouraging argument that God would reward the martyr with eternal salvation and not having to undergo the terrors of Judgment Day. Even the most devout of Catholics had to engage with the notion that they were innately sinful as a result of their human nature. Thus the possibility of freeing one's self from past sins combined with removing the opportunity to commit future sin made martyrdom, for some, a more welcome prospect. It was considered advantageous to be condemned by a human judge for the Catholic faith because it indicated that you would not be condemned by the divine judge. Robert Persons, also writing in response to Campion's execution, had claimed that

at the last they can afflict us no longer ... both they and we be  
 transposed to a new Judgment seate ... at what time if we suffer in a  
 good cause... all our teares shall be wiped awaye by our saviour  
 himselfe, all our racked members resettled, all our dispersed bowles

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<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, sig.10v.

restored againe, and we placed owt of all feare, sorrow, & affliction, for the time to come.<sup>73</sup>

The idea that Campion would receive approval from God at his judgment stressed that he was not a traitor. The witnesses were ‘false and lewdly taken in’, and Judgement Day would prove the truth of Campion’s testimony.

Eschatology played an essential role in helping to rescue a martyr’s reputation from the charge of treason. In the report of the martyrdoms at Tyburn Alfield claimed that Ralph Sherwin, ‘being againe interrupted by Sir Francis Knowles, said in this wise: Tush, tush, you and I shal answeare this before an other Judge’.<sup>74</sup> Protestants may have carried favour with the regime but Catholics were convinced that their cause would be supported by the ultimate judge, an idea which they were not reticent in expressing. The notion of God’s judgement was felt to provide assurance that the martyr’s identity of innocent would be confirmed. Similarly, William Allen recounted in 1581 how a priest writing to his uncle declared that ‘when by the high Judge God him self this false visard of treason shal be removed from true Catholike mens faces, then shal it appeare who they be that carry a wel meaning, and who an evil murdering minde’.<sup>75</sup> The divine judge would not be deceived and it was frequently reported that martyrs invoked the idea of God judging their souls to support the truth of their claims. Eschatology and God’s judgement became a final resort for the individual faced with challenging the power of the State. Allen asked ‘Can any man think that these men would lye to their damnation, at the very going out of their breath into the judgement of God: whose conscience was so religious’.<sup>76</sup> The destination of one’s eternal soul was too much to risk and therefore constancy in one’s claims at the gallows was felt to be testament to their truth. It was felt that the quarrel between Catholicism and Protestantism would be resolved by God’s judgment.

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<sup>73</sup> R. Persons, *An epistle of the persecution of Catholickes in Englande* (Douai, 1582), p. 40.

<sup>74</sup> T. Alfield, *A true reporte of the death & martyrdom of M. Campion Jesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581 Observid and written by a Catholike preist, which was present therat Wherunto is annexid certayne verses made by sundrie persons* [London, R. Rowlands or Verstegan], 1582), sig. C.2v.

<sup>75</sup> W. Allen, *A briefe historie of the glorious martyrdom of XII. reverend priests, executed within these twelve monethes for confession and defence of the Catholike faith. But under the false pretence of treason. With a note of sundrie things that befel them in their life and imprisonment: and a preface declaring their innocencie. Set furth by such as were much conversant with them in their life, and present at their arraignment and death. Occidistis, sed non possedistis. that is you have slaine them, but you have not gotten possession* ([Rheims, J. Foigny?], 1582), pp. 84 – 85.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, p. 25.

Catholics used the idea of Judgement Day to challenge the state and attempt to persuade the regime against the persecution of ordinary Catholics. Following Campion's execution Campion's fellow missionary, Robert Persons, reminded Protestants that they would have to answer to God for their actions. Persons asked the Privy Council to 'Remember... that how different so ever our degrees be in this world yet must we all be equall before the common judge, at the latter daie'.<sup>77</sup> Persons warned that

all those afflicted persons, these tormented, these imprisoned, these impoverished, these poore men, women, children, and servauntes, which lye now in miserie by your meanes wither lurcking in corners or driven from place to place, not daring to appeare or shew their countenance before your Lordships, must stand by you without feare at that daie, to give in evidence of thinges passed against them.<sup>78</sup>

Persons argued that the persecution which Catholics were suffering in England would damn Protestants at the Judgement Seat of God. The underlying argument of this was that Catholics suffered wrongly and Protestantism was false. Persons asked

What good or co[m]fort can... the broken synowes, the dismembered jointes, the rented bowles of your country me[n], of your ownr quiet subjects, of most peacable, modest, and innocent priests yelde unto your soules at that daye? You must your selves crye for mercye in that dreadfull howe.<sup>79</sup>

Persons used the idea of God's wrath against the Protestant regime at Judgement Day to claim the executed priests as martyrs rather than traitors. In so doing Persons also expressed a similar idea to Allen that God will be the ultimate arbitrator between Protestants and Catholics. Persons wrote of 'the greate no[m]ber of those moste reverende bishopps, doctors, priests, and other confessors of Christ, whiche in pryson have bene either choked with filthie stinking favour, or co[n]summed with sorowe and hunger' and were therefore not publically executed by the state, or died before sentencing, that their cases were referred 'to the Judgement seate of Christe'.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> R. Persons, *An epistle of the persecution of Catholickes in Englande* (Douai, 1582), p. 38.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 38 – 39.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 73

Here Persons used apocalypticism to restore the reputations of those that died before sentencing and to threaten the regime with eternal damnation. Persons suggests that at Judgement Day God will overturn earthly verdicts and exonerate Catholics.

Catholics used the idea of Judgment Day to further argue that human judges and the secular courts were stepping beyond their jurisdiction in judging priests and had no right to do so. For instance, on 19 August 1583 John Bodey and John Slade were arraigned at the Summer Assizes for the Supremacy and entered into a disputation with Laurence Humphrey concerning whether Constantine had called the Council of Nice. The two Catholic scholars argued that

When the byshopps weare come to the councell some of them havinge certayne quarrells and dissensions betweene them selves desired the Emperor to have the hearing of theyr causes... [the Emperor] answerd in this sorte... “God have appointed yow priests and have given yow power to judge of us also, and therefore we are all judged of yow, but yow can not be judged of men, whearfore looke for the judgement of God... and let your quarrells whatsoever they be, be reserved to that Divine triall.<sup>81</sup>

This example would have been particularly fitting as Elizabeth was often portrayed as a new Constantine. The notion that priests could only be judged by God reserved the resolving of the Reformation dispute to the apocalypse and undermined the sentence passed by the court. Although the martyr would have to comply with the sentence pronounced on them, apocalypticism made it clear that it was unjustified, as no treason had been committed, and illegitimate, as men were not to judge priests. Martyrs politically challenged the regime in their passivity and apocalypticism was invoked to both testify the truth of the martyrs' claims and to destabilize the court and its sentence.

### **Persecution and Identity Confirmation**

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<sup>81</sup> J. Bodey, ‘Certain Reasons whye I mighte affirme that the Emperor Constantine the greate called not the Concill of Nice by his own Imperiall authoritie, 1583’, in: J. H. Pollen (ed.), *Unpublished documents relating to the English martyrs*, Catholic Record Society, Vol. I, 1584 – 1603 (London, J. Whitehead & Son, 1908), pp. 41 - 42.

Martyrdom and persecution were felt to confirm the eschatological identities of the persecutor and the persecuted. It was therefore necessary to suffer for the faith to expose the eschatological identities of Protestantism and Catholicism. The Bible was clear that Antichrist and his forces would persecute the Saints in the End, an idea which the annotations to the Douai-Rheims translation expanded upon, while these predicted apocalyptic afflictions were set in an immediate English context by the translators of the Douai-Rheims New Testament. For example, the annotations to chapter twelve of the Douai-Rheims Apocalypse claimed that ‘As the Church Catholicke now in England in this time of persecutions... may be said to be fled in the desert’ and this fleeing into the desert is ‘during the time of persecution under Antichrist’.<sup>82</sup> The temporal and geographical specificity of the annotation suggested that Antichrist, in the form of the Protestant regime, was in England. The notion of fleeing into the desert indicates that the Catholic Church figured itself as the woman clothed in the sun who would be protected by God. This in turn placed the Catholic Church after the third woe and immediately before the beast from the sea emerges, and predicted persecution for one thousand two hundred and sixty days (3 ½ years). The annotation taught that ‘By great persecution he would draw her, that is, her children from the true faith but every one of the faithful elect, gladly bearing their part thereof over come his tyrannie’.<sup>83</sup> Endurance of the apocalyptic persecution, considered to be the persecution Catholics faced in Elizabethan England, was necessary to overcome the Elizabethan regime. This supported a militant passivity as Catholic priests suffered and died rather than conform or flee. The priests’ active passivity in the face of persecution showed that they were God’s soldiers and highlighted the diabolical nature of their opponents.

However, the fires of Mary’s reign had scorched English national memory and complicated the notion of martyrdom. Thomas Harding argued that it was not persecution which proved truth but what one was persecuted for and therefore heretics suffered just punishment not persecution.<sup>84</sup> The Douai-Rheims Apocalypse forthrightly declared that ‘Putting heretickes to death, is not to shede the bloud of the saints’.<sup>85</sup> This idea predated the translation and printing of the Douai-Rheims edition of the Bible. Nicholas Sanders drew on

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<sup>82</sup> Apocalypse, *New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (Rheims, 1582), p. 721.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> T. Harding, *A confutation of a booke intituled An apologie of the Church of England* (Antwerp, John Leat, 1565), fol. 6v; the pseudo-martyr debate is analysed by Anne Dillon in: A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535 – 1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), pp. 18 – 72.

<sup>85</sup> Apocalypse, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 731.

this difficult distinction when he proposed to ‘grant, that Church to be true, which is persecuted, yet I say that you rather have persecuted us, the[n] we have persecuted you’.<sup>86</sup> Catholics repeatedly maintained that Protestants were killed for heresy and to prevent the infection of the wider congregation, partly to discharge themselves from accusations of Antichristian persecution. Sanders reveals the similarity of the accusations levelled by both Catholics and Protestants. Just as Protestants claimed that Catholics died for treason, so Catholics maintained that Protestants were killed for heresy and to prevent the infection of the wider congregation. Both Catholics and Protestants made these arguments to discharge themselves from accusations of Antichristian persecution. Sanders argued that the sixth mark of Antichrist

whereby to know this broode of Antichrist, may be in that Antichrist... shall prefer the temporal reign or sword, before the spiritual. A certaine signe wherof this is, because he shall constraine men with force of armes, not only to kepe their former faith... but also to take a new faith, which thing no man would doe, except he were of this minde, that mens consciences ought to yeld to his violent force.<sup>87</sup>

To forcibly introduce a new religion was considered to be a sign of the False Church and Antichrist whereas to suffer persecution for faith was believed to signal the identity of the True Church. Likewise, an increase in persecution was understood to signal the End. Suffering persecution validated the Catholic faith and this encouraged a militant passivity.

The duration of persecution became a key battleground and a signal of eschatological identities. Sanders charged that ‘*The persecution (say you) of the Romish Antichrist oppressed us, which mark also you alleage for the truth of your congregation... Antichrists persecution shall [en]dure but three yeres and a half. And is the Pope Antichrist, whose persecution (as you say) hath dured these nine hundred yeres?*’<sup>88</sup> Catholic arguments about the duration of persecution and its relationship to Antichrist were made prior to the enforcement of the Elizabethan penal laws. As Protestant rule lasted longer than 3 ½ years the eschatological identification based on this number was challenged. This resulted in a change in tack and

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<sup>86</sup> N. Sanders, *Rocke of the Churche wherein the primacy of S. Peter and of his successours the Bishops of Rome is proved out of Gods worde* (Louvain, John Fowler, 1567), sig. \*\*7v.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*, p. 498.

<sup>88</sup> N. Sanders, *Rocke of the Churche wherein the primacy of S. Peter and of his successours the Bishops of Rome is proved out of Gods worde* (Louvain, John Fowler, 1567), sig. \*\*6v-7r.

Sanders used Protestants' own apocalyptic and eschatological arguments against them. Sanders claimed that 'Hel gates shal not prevaile against the true Churche. *And yet is your* congregation the true Churche, against which you confesse Antichrist so have to prevailed' and drew on the Bible as an eschatological authority referring to Daniel 7, Apocalypse 12 and Matthew 16 in the margin.<sup>89</sup> This method of using an opponent's own reasoning against themselves may be one reason why Catholics did not attempt to date the End.

Despite a reluctance to predict and date the End Catholics did place contemporary events in the apocalyptic time-line. Thomas Hide, a Catholic religious controversialist who fled to the continent in 1561, commented in 1580 on contemporary persecution that 'It was revealed to Saint John... that the churche should have greate persecution'.<sup>90</sup> This placed contemporary Catholic sufferings within the predictions of the Apocalypse, a point Hide underscored with the marginal note which directed the reader to Apocalypse chapter two.<sup>91</sup> Hide applied the predictions of the Apocalypse to the sufferings of Catholics in England and proposed that these persecutions were because 'heresie transforme... hir selfe into the Angel of light... stricketh grevouselie with the sworde of the tonge, and shedeth bloud creullie, by killing Christe in his me[m]bers'.<sup>92</sup> Protestant persecution thus revealed that the world was in the End and confirmed that Protestantism was a snare of Antichrist. Hide recited Psalm 101 and prayed, 'Arise o lorde in time, let al the kings of the earthe feare thy name. Arise and have mercie upon Sion, for it is time to have mercie upon hir, yea the time is come'.<sup>93</sup> Hide expressed hope that the persecution would be shortly ended by God and felt that 'the time is come'. Thus persecution and suffering confirmed eschatological identities and in turn that the End had begun or, through God's mercy, would soon begin.

Martyrdom was thought of and discussed within the framework of an apocalyptic and eschatological cosmic battle between the True and False Church. Catholic martyrs were described in Catholic accounts as witnesses who confirmed the True Church through their

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<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, sig. \*\*7r.

<sup>90</sup> T. Hide, *A consolatorie epistle to the afflicted catholikes: set foorth by Thomas Hide Priest* (Louvain [East Ham], John Lyo[n] [Greenstreet House Press], 1579 [1580]), sig. Ai.v.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Ai.v.

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Aiiijr – Aiiijv.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, sig. Fiiijr.

blood. John Boste, a former fellow of Oxford and a missionary priest, communicated this idea in his letter to Andrew Hilton at the end of 1582 when he said

To yourself and your Bedfellow commendacions, with pacience and constancie as best becometh Christian Confessors, whom God hathe chosen to beare witnesse of his name to the comfort of them that love Hym and His Spouse the Catholique Church, and to the condemnation of so many that so willingly and wittingly join in the Sinagoge of Satan.<sup>94</sup>

The description of Protestants as members of the ‘Sinagoge of Satan’ suggested that they were the predicted False Church of the End. It directed the reader to chapters 2 and 3 of the Apocalypse in which John was commanded by an Angel to write to the Church of Smyrna that God knew ‘thy tribulation and thy povertie, but thou art riche: and thou art blasphemed of them that say them selves to be Jewes and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan. Feare none of these things which thou shalt suffer’.<sup>95</sup> The revelation continued with the warning to ‘Behold I come quickly: hold that which thou hast, that no man may take thy crowne’.<sup>96</sup> Hence martyrdom and salvation were linked from the beginning chapters of the Apocalypse with resisting the False Church of the End times. Boste described martyrdom as an action which had a double immediate effect as it comforted the faithful and condemned ‘so many that so willingly and wittingly join in the Sinagoge of Satan’.<sup>97</sup> Boste considered the persecutors agents of God to enable his chosen confessors to die for the faith. Blood was needed to confirm the True Church.

Throughout Elizabeth’s reign martyrs were perceived as agents of their own and humanity’s fate and their blood was considered a spiritual weapon. Robert Southwell wrote to Father Agazzari on 22 December 1586 that ‘Christ’s soldiers fight under most favourable terms, for if the enemy defeats them he crowns them, and if he let them alone, he is himself defeated’.<sup>98</sup> The martyrs would receive the crown of eternal bliss or, if the spiritual enemy

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<sup>94</sup> J. H. Pollen (ed.), *Unpublished documents relating to the English martyrs*, Catholic Record Society, Vol. I, 1584 – 1603 (London, J. Whitehead & Son, 1908), pp. 36 – 37.

<sup>95</sup> Apocalypse 2:9, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ faithfully translated into English*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 702.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p. 705.

<sup>97</sup> J. H. Pollen (ed.), *Unpublished documents relating to the English martyrs*, Catholic Record Society, Vol. I, 1584 – 1603 (London, J. Whitehead & Son, 1908), p. 37.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, p. 317.



retreated from persecution, it would signal their conversion to the true faith. Southwell used martial and active language to describe Catholic martyrs. Southwell claimed in his *Epistle of Comfort* in 1587 that ‘we are Christians, whose captayne is a crucifixe, whose standard is a Crosse, whose armoure patience, whose battayle persecution, whose victorie death, whose triumphe martirdome’.<sup>99</sup> Catholics were perceived as an army in an eschatological battle. Similar to Alfield’s notion of an ongoing eschatological battle through the duration of history, Southwell also perceived the current conflict as not just between Catholics and contemporary Protestants but between Catholics and all heretics throughout history. Southwell argued that

we are now in a battayle, not onlyr against men of our tymes, who are both Epicures in conditions, Jewes in malice, and Heretickes in proud and obstinate spirites: but agaysnst whole rable and generatio[n] of all heretickes, that since Christes tyme have ben, & in a ma[n]ner with Satan the father of lying, and his whole armye.<sup>100</sup>

The larger historical framework onto which martyrs’ deaths were superimposed connected all those who died for the True Faith from Christ to the modern day. However, Southwell’s temporal specificity, that ‘we are now in battayle’, is significant. Through this Southwell did not suggest that the battle between good and evil was constant in intensity throughout history but that his own time was either a new battle or of a different type. The statement ‘we are now in battayle’ may suggest that previously there was a pause or a qualitative difference. The notion that Catholics were in a confrontation with Satan’s whole army may suggest that Southwell interpreted contemporary events as eschatological signifiers as it was predicted that Satan’s army would assemble at the End before God’s Judgement.<sup>101</sup> Southwell may thus be setting contemporary martyrdoms in the last chapter of events contained within the Apocalypse.

Similar to Southwell his fellow Jesuit, Robert Persons, although not basing his eschatological interpretation of the present on the Apocalypse, suggested that English Catholics should be prepared for the imminent Judgement of God. The third volume of Persons’s *Treatise of three conversions* was dedicated ‘to the glorius Company of English Sainctes in heaven’,

<sup>99</sup> R. Southwell, *An epistle of comfort* (Paris, 1587), fol. 41r.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, fols. 83r – 83v.

<sup>101</sup> Apocalypse 20:7 – 9.

and described English Catholics as ‘Thessalonians’.<sup>102</sup> This choice of comparison is noteworthy as 1 and 2 Thessalonians were where the Apostle Paul outlined his eschatological and apocalyptic worldview. Paul described how the Thessalonians are God’s elect and will be delivered from the wrath of God which will befall the earth. Paul warned the Church that ‘the day of our Lord shal so come, as a theefe in the night. For when they shal say, peace & securitie: then shal sodaine destruction come upon them... and they shal not escape’.<sup>103</sup> This, and other parts of Thessalonians, urged God’s chosen people to stay steadfast in the faith, resist temptation and endure tribulations, as Judgement Day inevitably approached. We encounter here the theme of spiritual warfare as Paul used military allegories and claimed that ‘we that are of the day, are sober, having on the breast-plate of faith and charitie, and a helmet, the hope of salvation’.<sup>104</sup> An eschatological worldview encouraged some Christians to think of themselves as the soldiers of God. The choice of Thessalonians to describe the Catholic Church in England was significant and reveals a certain apocalyptic and eschatological perception. The identification was loaded with moral meaning and had a pedagogical quality, directing English Catholics to remain faithful ready for the Judgement of God. Persons’s *Treatise of three conversions of England* was a confutation of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* and a dramatic re-reading of eschatological history. This large work was divided into three volumes and was a polemical attack on the Protestant history of Christianity in England.<sup>105</sup> Through comparing Catholic and Protestant martyrs Robert Persons underlined the qualities he and other Catholics felt were needed to be a true martyr. Consequently Persons portrayed Protestant martyrs as false-martyrs and false-prophets and thus agents of the End. Persons alleged that ‘Foxe and his fellowes have brought in and canonized a rablement of most contemptible people... they have byn punished for their wickednesse’.<sup>106</sup> Persons did not view Foxe’s martyrs as alternative saints but rather as heretics of old and new false prophets. Persons accused Foxe of deliberately deceiving his readers and declared that ‘my cheefe complaint against him is of willfull error’.<sup>107</sup> As we have seen in the True versus False Church chapter, these deceptions and false prophets were to be expected as Mathew, Mark and Luke warned of a rise in false-teachers during the

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<sup>102</sup> R. Persons, *A treatise of three conversions of England* (St Omer, 1603), p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:2-5, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 532.

<sup>104</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:8, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 532.

<sup>105</sup> Persons’s *Treatise of three conversions* is discussed at length in: A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535 – 1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), pp. 324 – 360.

<sup>106</sup> R. Persons, *A treatise of three conversions of England* (St Omer, 1603), p. 5.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, p. 63.

End times.<sup>108</sup> The annotations to Matthew chapter 7 explained that the ‘Extraordinaire appearance of zeale and holiness is the sheepes cote in some Heretikes: but these of this time Weare not that garment much, being men of unsatiable sinne’.<sup>109</sup> It is important that the annotations describe ‘these of this time’ in an explanation of the false-prophets of the End.<sup>110</sup> This may also be the reason why Persons expended much of his text on recording the private failings of the Protestant martyrs, their marriages and thus lack of virginity and purity, and their status. Persons’s presentation of how the outward appearance of zeal and holiness contrasted with the individual’s moral behaviour did lasting damage to Foxe’s claims. If one was a false-martyr one’s support was from the devil not God, it was obstinacy not courage, and it resulted in damnation not salvation. This was a distinction that was further emphasised when they were compared to the original martyrs of the Church, which Persons did by placing the original Catholic calendar of saints next to Foxe’s calendar alongside an explanation of who each individual martyr was.<sup>111</sup> His personal attacks were therefore not intended to be responses to gender or status but a means of highlighting the difference between the holiness of Catholic martyrs and the ‘false’ Protestant martyrs. This in turn accorded them an eschatological and apocalyptic role, explained their actions and motivations and invoked biblical warnings not to be deceived by all those who claimed to be of the Lord. Persons’s work confirmed the identity of the martyrs throughout history and this in turn increased the eschatological understanding of the present.

### **Martyrdom as an Apocalyptic and Eschatological Gift from God**

Throughout history and in the present, the martyr was thought of as chosen by God and his suffering confirmed his status as a member of the Elect. Thomas Hide claimed that ‘This cause is so importante, that none can suffer for it, but by the gracious gifte of God, and God geaveth this gifte to none, but to his special freindes’.<sup>112</sup> The conceptualisation of martyrdom as a gift was not innovative. However, the increasing number of Catholic priests and lay people joining the ranks of martyrs meant that an explanation as to why God had allowed this to happen was sought. Eschatology and apocalypticism allowed the Elizabethan executions to be wrestled

<sup>108</sup> Eschatological deception is discussed in chapter 2, pp. 55 – 57, p. 60, false prophets and the End are a theme of Mark 13, Matthew 24 & Luke 6.

<sup>109</sup> Annotation 15, *The New Testament of Jesus Christ*, G. Martin (ed.), (English College Rheims, 1582), p. 19.

<sup>110</sup> The notion that Protestantism was a sign of the End is analysed in chapter 2.

<sup>111</sup> See: ‘A Double Calendar’ in the Third Part of: R. Persons, *A treatise of three conversions of England* (St Omer, 1603).

<sup>112</sup> T. Hide, *A Consolatorie Epistle to the afflicted Catholikes* (Louvaine, [London] 1579), sig. A.8v.

from the government's control and into God's. These state-directed acts of religious violence became expressions of God's love for his elect. God permitted the enemies of the faith to create new saints within the True Church. William Allen declared 'JESU! what a pleasur, what honor and blessedness have their ennemies done unto them, thus soddenly and everlastingly, to make them numbered in glorie amongst the saints'.<sup>113</sup> Eschatology and apocalypticism enabled the re-shaping of violent deaths for religion into a blessing from God for the individual and the Catholic community as a whole.

Martyrdom and suffering for Christ was considered to confer advantages on Judgment Day which helped to sustain and encourage prospective martyrs. This sentiment was present throughout a letter written to the Catholic priest Thomas Cottam who was imprisoned, tortured and finally martyred at Tyburn on 30 May 1582.<sup>114</sup> The writer comforted Cottam that

He wyll shewe us then hys blessed woundes & badges of hys bytter passion & byd us looke what he of love abyd for us, & us to shewe wherein we have loved hym agayn, & what we have enduered for hym. When suche unfortunate felowes as myself havynge lytle to shewe shall tremble & quake & wyshe wth Job to be hydde under earthe untill hys fury were paste. And then shall you & yo[u]r felowes... stand boldly, & confidently, way more then so even asysdoryly & tryumphantly syttyng wth him in judgement to judge the twelve trybes of Israel, holding out yor dysmembred bodyes, yor qwartered lymes fettered legges racked joyntes & broken neckes for hys sake & defence of hys faythe all brighter shynyng then the sonne.<sup>115</sup>

It was alleged that one would be required to explain 'what we have enduered for' Christ at one's judgment and thus martyrdom provided spiritual relief for Catholics as it meant that this question could be confidently answered. The unjust punishments inflicted on the martyrs' bodies were believed to inscribe their love for Christ and the Church in their flesh while their

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<sup>113</sup> W. Allen, *A briefe historie of the glorious martyrdom of XII. reverend priests, executed within these twelve monethes for confession and defence of the Catholike faith* (1582), p. 44.

<sup>114</sup> Although the letter is catalogued as an anonymous letter to a traitor, fol. 3r describes 'my Cottam' and the manuscript is dated three days before Cottam's execution.

<sup>115</sup> New Haven, Yale University Beinecke Library, Osborn a18, fol.1v (A consolatorye letter to a traitor neare ye gallows founde at Bellamy's at Uxenden: Peers Plowghman hys answer to the doctours interrogatoryes, 27 May 1582).

bodily torments and dismembered limbs were deemed to provide physical proof of their faith and worthiness to the ultimate Judge and set them apart from the rest of humanity. Instead of experiencing tribulations and purgatory the martyr would be ‘tryumphantly syttyng wth him in judgement to judge the twelve trybes of Israel’. The author did not refrain from describing the agony Cottam would experience and claimed that it was the coming pains which would make ‘my simple consolatyones... so welcomme to you’.<sup>116</sup> This may be why, as Peter Lake and Michael Questier have argued, ‘it was the Catholic rather than the Protestant accounts that were anxious to concentrate on the graphic details of the victim’s physical sufferings’.<sup>117</sup> The ‘consolatyones’ to be had were not in the shortness of suffering. Rather solace was to be drawn from the worthiness of the cause, the reward and the

unspeakable and wonderfull joye [that] p[re]sently awayt our cumyng,  
yf we comme as gods martyrs by the swe[e]t & sw[i]fte wey of hangyng  
& quartering. The sayntes in heaven yf emulatyon would enter theyr  
sacred breasts woulde envy our happy state beyng in place whene we  
may suffer payn & torment for our lordes sake. For dwtlesse yf theyr  
joyes were uncomlete, to suffer for Chryste woulde be theyr fyrste &  
pryncypall wyshe and desyer. Chryste in day of judgement wyll  
cumme.<sup>118</sup>

The idea of Christ’s judgment should be encouragement enough to endure one’s execution. The notion of a following judgement turned a protracted and painful death into a joyous conclusion to a holy life. For example, William Allen printed with his report of the martyrdoms of twelve priests a copy of a letter written by a ‘M. Sherwin’. The letter presented the future martyr’s feelings in his rhetorical questions which asked ‘how joyful should we then appeare before the tribunal seat of his Fathers glorie: the dignitie whereof when I thinke, my flesh quaketh, not sustaining by reason of mortal infirmitie the presence of my creators Majestie’.<sup>119</sup> Faith in a coming judgment and belief that everyone will have to give an account of their life and actions to a judge who had himself been martyred for humanity’s sins made personal

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, fol. 1r.

<sup>117</sup> P. Lake & M. Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (London, Yale University Press, 2002), p. xvii.

<sup>118</sup> New Haven, Yale University Beinecke Library, Osborn a18, fol. 1r (A consolatorye letter to a traitor neare ye gallows founde at Bellamy’s at Uxenden: Peers Plowghman hys answer to the doctours interrogatoryes, 27 May 1582).

<sup>119</sup> W. Allen, *A briefe historie of the glorious martyrdom of XII. reverend priests, executed within these twelve monethes for confession and defence of the Catholike faith* (Rheims, J. Foigny?, 1582), p. 83.

martyrdom an event to be embraced. Thus, eschatology supported and inspired prospective martyrs on both the figurative and literal road to the gallows.

### **Conclusion**

Apocalypticism and eschatology were an integral part of understanding and confronting persecution and martyrdom in post-Reformation England. Current events were transposed onto an apocalyptic and eschatological framework while Catholics engaged with a world which was divided into binary opposites, the True Church and the False, and these represented an on-going cosmic battle. It was not only Protestants who interpreted the English Mission of 1580 – 1581 as having apocalyptic connotations. Genuine belief that the persecutions predicted in the Apocalypse applied to contemporary events enabled Catholicism to survive and Catholics to remain hopeful for the restoration of justice. Catholic blood and suffering revealed and confirmed the identities of the Antichrist and the Whore and acted as a sacrifice to turn God's punishments from England, while the Book of the Apocalypse promised that they would be rewarded at God's approaching Judgement. Martyrdom was one way the Catholic eschatological worldview was translated into action. Placing martyrdom back in an eschatological worldview re-orientates our understanding of early modern Catholic Martyrdom. It was not a passive act on behalf of the martyr but a powerful form of resistance. The martyrs were perceived, and perceived themselves, as eschatological agents of salvation and the divine plan. The findings of this chapter support the notion that English Catholics considered the Protestant Church to be the eschatological False Church rather than a heretical congregation. This chapter is essential for understanding how deeply this strain of thought ran for some English Catholics.

### Conclusion

Catholic eschatological thought in early modern England resulted in individuals taking a range of actions to accommodate their beliefs with the reality of living under Protestant rule. One example exposes the interplay between individual interpretation and a shared Catholic eschatological worldview. On the 24 October 1583 the young Catholic gentleman John Somerville rode from his home in Warwickshire to London declaring his intention to shoot the Queen.<sup>1</sup> It was alleged by multiple people at the time that Somerville was suffering from a mental illness.<sup>2</sup> Setting aside the question of whether or not Somerville was mentally unstable, the case draws out common threads we encounter across the decades of Elizabeth's reign suggesting that it was an extreme reaction to prevalent and persistent ideas. In the months prior to Somerville's attempt on the Queen's life, it has been claimed that Elizabeth Somerville gave her brother John a copy of Luis de Grenada's *Of Prayer and Meditation*.<sup>3</sup> This is possible as John's sister Elizabeth did give him Catholic books and had recently returned from the Continent, St. Omer.<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth would probably have travelled via Paris, where the English translation, including Hopkins's apocalyptic epistle, was printed the previous year. This underlines the importance of the movement of ideas between England and the continent and also the importance of Catholic women in sustaining the faith.<sup>5</sup>

The evidence presented in the first chapter of this thesis suggests that early modern Catholics were influenced to act by works of devotional eschatology. Was John Somerville? As well as his possible exposure to devotional eschatology, Somerville was seemingly troubled

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<sup>1</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/163 fol. 54r, fol.57r (Examination of divers persons taken before John Doyley, of Merton, touching certain speeches against the Queen's Majesty, supposed to have been spoken by John Somerfeld, that he meant to shoot her through with his dagg, and hoped to see her head set on a pole, for that she was a serpent and a viper), Glyn Parry has investigated the case of Somerville and its relationship to competing interests at Court, see: G. Parry, 'Catholicism and Tyranny in Shakespeare's Warwickshire', in R. Malcolm Smuts (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 121 – 138.

<sup>2</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/163 fol. 140v (Thomas Wylkes to Burghley, Leicester, and Walsingham, November 7 1583).

<sup>3</sup> This was claimed by Charlotte Stopes, see: C. C. Stopes, *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries* (Stratford-Upon-Avon, Shakespeare Head Press, 1907) however two of the books Elizabeth gave her brother remain un-named in the records, see: G. Parry, 'Catholicism and Tyranny in Shakespeare's Warwickshire', in R. Malcolm Smuts (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/163 fol. 140v (Thomas Wylkes to Burghley, Leicester, and Walsingham, November 7 1583).

<sup>5</sup> M. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women, 1560 – 1640, in: M. Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society, 1500 – 1800* (London, Methuen & Co., 1985), pp. 149 – 180, S. Mandelson and P. Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550 – 1720* (London, Routledge, 1993), P. Lake & M. Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England* (London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011).

by the queen's treatment of Mary Queen of Scots. It was recorded that 'in a Trunke of Elizabeth Somerville lefte by her in that house [Graunts] we founde a Booke intituled *Fore Beute Marie*' and conversations with Hall turned to Mary's right to the crown.<sup>6</sup> As the chapter on Catholic conspiracies has shown, Mary Queen of Scots was often a focal point for Catholic hopes of regime change. Somerville's alleged identification of Queen Elizabeth as a 'serpent and a Viper' highlights the significance of eschatologically identifying an enemy discussed in the chapter considering the identification of Elizabeth as Jezebel.<sup>7</sup> It was recorded that in the months leading up to his dramatic decision to kill the Queen that Somerville had engaged his father-in-law's gardener in frequent and lengthy discussions. They were probably not talking about horticulture. The 'gardener' was in fact the Catholic priest Hugh Hall harboured by Somerville's father-in-law, Edward Arden.<sup>8</sup> Did they discuss Somerville's plot? Did Hall encourage or discourage Somerville from proceeding? Hall's involvement in this episode reflects the connection between priests and plotting considered in the plots chapter. A few months later Hall was in fact condemned though ultimately he was not executed for his suspected role in the Throckmorton plot which the Somerville plot helped to expose.<sup>9</sup>

This thesis began by considering how an eschatological understanding of the present and fear of Judgement Day caused the Catholic Robert Markham in 1592, while still professing his loyalty to the Queen, to abandon his home and family for a self-imposed exile on the Continent.<sup>10</sup> Markham's behaviour was at the other end of the spectrum to that of John Somerville nine years previously but both shared common attributes. Both were men in their young twenties and both abandoned their families for the Catholic cause. Both made their decisions to act against the backdrop of a Catholic eschatological understanding of the

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<sup>6</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/163 fol. 140r (Thomas Wylkes to Burghley, Leicester, and Walsyngham, November 7 1583).

<sup>7</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/163 fol.57r (Examination of divers persons taken before John Doyley, of Merton, touching certain speeches against the Queen's Majesty, supposed to have been spoken by John Somerfeld, that he meant to shoot her through with his dagg, and hoped to see her head set on a pole, for that she was a serpent and a viper), The apocalyptic connotations of serpents are discussed in chapter 4, pp. 151 – 152, A poem from 1587 describing Elizabeth as Jezebel also described how she had a serpent in place of a human heart, see: 'To the English Jezebel', trans. A. S. Wilkinson, *Mary Queen of Scots and French Public Opinion, 1542 – 1600* (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2004), p. 119.

<sup>8</sup> Kew, The National Archive, SP 12/164 fol.141r (Thomas Wylkes to Burghley, Leicester, and Walsyngham, November 7 1583).

<sup>9</sup> Glyn Parry argues that it was Hall's connection to Sir Christopher Hatton which meant that he escaped execution, see: G. Parry, 'Catholicism and Tyranny in Shakespeare's Warwickshire', in R. Malcolm Smuts (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 125 – 127.

<sup>10</sup> British Library, Lansdowne MS 72/43, fol.122r (Robert Markham, to his Father, dated from Gravesend; endeavouring to excuse his rash flight and apostasy, Aug. 27, 1592), see: Introduction p. 1.



Reformation and Protestant rule in England and, potentially, after reading works of Catholic devotional eschatology.

Elizabethan Catholics inherited a vibrant tradition of contemplating the four last things from the Middle Ages and early Reformation which included meditating on the Apocalypse. As we saw in chapter 1, works of devotional eschatology created a bridge from thinking about one's own life and the four last things to contemplating the end of the world. Devotional eschatology was an ordinary part of daily life and encouraged an eschatological and apocalyptic worldview. It was a source of comfort as it encouraged the belief that God would provide justice. It also encouraged action because it argued that one would be held to account by God for one's choices. As Catholicism became increasingly legislated against, Catholic devotional texts became in themselves a political challenge to the regime. This challenge had an eschatological and apocalyptic edge. Quotations from the Apocalypse were included on the title pages of devotional texts and dedicatory epistles compared contemporary events to biblical prophecies and the apocalyptic timeline. These meditations on the apocalypse were not just important for how Catholics viewed the future but may also allude to how they perceived their present. These devotional texts suggest that an eschatological worldview and apocalyptic understanding of the present was not monopolised by Protestants.

Catholics also viewed the Reformation as an eschatological event. The initial reluctance to declare the Protestant Church the False Church may have been because it meant recognising Protestantism as a Church rather than a congregation of heretics. Despite Rome's caution in making eschatological identifications, writers based in Louvain and Antwerp made strong allusions to the eschatological nature of the English Protestant Church. In the 1560s some Catholics suggested that Biblical prophecies of the End and the rise of the False Church described contemporary events. The texts considered in chapter two suggest that, amongst the English exiles, the debate about Protestantism in England was eschatologically framed. However, none went so far as to make an open identification of Protestantism as the False Church in the course of their printed confrontations with the Church of England. The 1570 Bull of Excommunication made no public declaration that Protestantism was an eschatological sign but the Catholic Church did not censor individuals or works which suggested or named the Protestant Church as the False Church of Antichrist. This allowed a persistent drip of these

ideas to enter England and circulate amongst English Catholics. During the 1580s the eschatology inherent in the Jesuit Mission reinforced ideas about an ongoing war between the forces of God and Satan. Nevertheless, Catholic understandings of what exactly in the Apocalypse represented Protestantism were not fixed. However, despite the wider range of interpretations available to Catholics, there was a large degree of continuity in Catholic thought surrounding the eschatological nature of Protestantism. The break with Rome was thought to be the great departing from the faith predicted to occur before the Second Coming. Nevertheless, during the 1560s and 1570s there was a notable reticence about naming Protestantism as the Great Apostasy. This changed in the 1580s as eschatological identifications became stronger in response to the increasing difficulties and persecution Catholics faced in England. Eschatology made separation vital for individual salvation. Eschatological arguments for resistance and separation were being expounded in the 1560s and began to crystallise from the 1580s onwards. However continued compromise created a wider range of opinions rather than one clear eschatological message. This fluidity in Catholic eschatological thought of the period may be one reason why it has gone undetected in the historical record.

Early modern English Catholics and Protestants shared a concern about the identity of Antichrist. This signals an apocalyptic worldview because the emergence of Antichrist was the strongest indicator that the world had entered the End times. Yet there was a difference between Protestant and Catholic identifications of this apocalyptic figure. Early modern Catholics were more cautious than their Protestant counterparts in identifying the Antichrist because they had inherited an extensive and complicated theological and popular tradition whereas Protestants had broken with traditional beliefs to identify the succession of popes as the Antichrist. This Protestant identification was strongly disputed by Catholics. In early modern England the Protestant identification of Antichrist moved from the religious realm to the political arena and placed the identification of Antichrist at the centre of Reformation debates and policies of political inclusion or exclusion. The context of confrontation limited Catholic responses to an extent because Catholics were preoccupied with answering Protestants point for point rather than expounding upon the topic of Antichrist at length. Protestantism had introduced a 'revolutionary' change which caused clerical Catholics to reaffirm the literal understanding of Antichrist, and therefore the Apocalypse. However Catholics went further than simple refutation and argued that Protestants prepared the way for Antichrist and were his forerunners.

Catholics were of the opinion that the final Antichrist was still to come but Catholic belief about the relationship between Antichrist and Protestantism was not uniform. As there were many individual Catholics, so there were also many different positions adopted on this issue. Yet it appears that between 1580 and 1582 Catholic apocalyptic worldviews hardened.

Elizabeth's gender complicated identifications of her as Antichrist but did not prevent Catholics from identifying her as an eschatological figure. Elizabeth was considered to be Jezebel, the apocalyptic Whore of Babylon. Allegations were made against individuals that they had called Elizabeth Jezebel, which suggests the idea that Elizabeth could be termed Jezebel was credible. In turn this implies that disobedience to the monarch may have been expressed eschatologically. The excommunication of Elizabeth in 1570 had a significant impact on apocalyptic and eschatological views of her. A memorandum in the Vatican archives issued in the autumn of 1570 from Brussels in the wake of the excommunication was explicit that Elizabeth was the Whore of the Apocalypse.<sup>11</sup> In the correspondence between nuncios and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church Elizabeth was referred to as that 'impious Jezebel'. A decade after the Bull and memorandum were issued it was alleged that in letters from Rome Elizabeth was still described as either the Antichrist or Whore.<sup>12</sup> The language employed by the leaders of the Catholic Church was significant because eschatology was a language of political action. Official identification of Elizabeth as Jezebel tended to remain private until the execution of Mary Queen of Scots which was felt to have confirmed Elizabeth's apocalyptic identity. Mary's execution caused the eschatological identification of Elizabeth to spill over from the private sphere and into the public. The eschatological understanding of Mary's death was particularly pronounced in Paris and the circles of the Catholic League. However these ideas were not geographically isolated because Paris was a centre for trade and exiles. In England William Allen presented Elizabeth as Jezebel in order to encourage rebellion against her and Catholic monarchs to act.<sup>13</sup> After Mary's execution Allen was not constrained by considerations of a political future which included Elizabeth. Therefore, this text may present ideas which Allen had previously only expressed in private. Publicly, Allen now used eschatology to encourage the deposition and murder of a monarch.

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<sup>11</sup> Discussed chapter 4, p. 133.

<sup>12</sup> Discussed chapter 4, pp. 140 – 142.

<sup>13</sup> Discussed chapter 4, pp. 155 – 160.

As discussed in chapter 5 the role of prophecy in Catholic dissent and plotting for regime change reveals the intersection between eschatology and prophetic thought. Time and events were believed to be divinely ordained but it was felt that there was a need for human agents to enact the divine will. The eschatological identification of Elizabeth meant that it was not simply necessary to remove her but that this was an action meriting reward from God. The eschatological understanding of the present also imbued action with urgency as the End was felt to be approaching. There were multiple means to challenge Elizabeth's rule prophetically. Whether it be through Galfridian prophecy, painted prophecies, the prophecies of the Apocalypse or an expectation of a coming 'golden age', they all expressed and channelled Catholic discontent. The prophetic and eschatological book of miscellanies discovered in 1584 may have been emblematic of the activities and worldview of the Catholic underground in early modern England. The location of the group that produced this on the fringes of England, its connection to Catholic priests, foreign financial support, focus on Mary Queen of Scots and a religious impetus for action reflected what had occurred throughout Elizabeth's reign from the 1570s onwards. With the similarities between the circumstances and practicalities of the supposed 1584 plot and all other plots in the reign, it may be that the prophecies and eschatology contained within the book of miscellanies reflected a wider current of opinion.

Removing the queen was not the only expression of apocalyptic agency. The Catholic eschatological worldview was subject to individual interpretation and resulted in a range of human actions. One way of confronting persecution in post-Reformation England was the adoption of a form of what I have termed 'militant passivity'. Based on biblical eschatological teachings, this took control from the State and gave it to God and the individual as the vessel for the divine plan. Martyrs were conceived of as eschatological soldiers and Catholic missionaries during the period under consideration had an apocalyptic vocation for martyrdom. This created a paradox in which martyrdom was both the clearest indicator that the End was nigh and that England was Babylon and simultaneously the means by which Babylon was to be overcome and salvation gained. The idea that Apocalypse chapter 7 spoke directly to the Society of Jesus and Catholic martyrs was internalised at the English College Rome and circulated amongst the English Catholic community, as is shown by its use in contemporary Catholic reports of English martyrdoms. The military language of the discourse of early modern Catholic martyrdom presents the martyrs as apocalyptic soldiers, fighting a spiritual battle for the True Church. Martyrdom was interpreted as the ultimate *imitatio Christi* and was

consequently closely interlaced with ideas about salvation at Judgment Day. Martyrdom would enable the True Church to prevail against the False Church, Antichrist and the Whore of Babylon. Martyrs would help to convert England back to Catholicism and nourish the True Church in its apocalyptic struggle, replenishing the fallen fighters for God. Martyrdom validated the True Church's and Babylon's contemporary identities and thus reinforced the eschatological worldview.

More could be done and placing what have previously been considered works expressing Catholic loyalty back into the eschatological worldview in which they were produced may cause us to reconsider the messages and undertones of such texts. For example, Anthony Copley's poem *A fig for fortune* requires a reassessment.<sup>14</sup> Expanding this research to consider the Jesuit archives and additional Jesuit correspondence may reveal further eschatological motivations behind the English mission.<sup>15</sup> Looking to the periphery of England, the eschatological thought of Welsh missionary priests requires investigation. Scratching the surface, we find one Jonas Meredith, described as 'of Wales' being imprisoned in the Gatehouse in 1577 for calling England Babylon.<sup>16</sup> Meredith's connection with Charles Paget, Thomas Morgan, Mary Queen of Scots and his re-imprisonment in 1586 reinforces the argument of this thesis that Catholic conspiracy and political challenge was expressed and understood eschatologically.<sup>17</sup> Additional manuscript research may refine the findings of this thesis and would allow us to deepen our understanding of private expressions of early modern English Catholic eschatology. Francis Young's findings regarding the numerological architecture of Sir Thomas Tresham's triangular lodge is suggestive that the findings of this thesis may just be the tip of the iceberg.<sup>18</sup> Catholic eschatological thought deepens and complicates our view of early modern English Catholicism. It suggests that early modern English Catholicism had more of a subversive political edge than previously recognised and that this was eschatologically inflected and framed. It highlights the commonalities between

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<sup>14</sup> A. Copley, *A fig for Fortune* (London, Printed by Richard Iohnes for C.A. [i.e. Anthony Copley?], 1596).

<sup>15</sup> Victor Houlston is currently preparing a multi-lingual edition of the *Correspondence and Unpublished Papers of Robert Persons, SJ (1546–1610)*.

<sup>16</sup> Meredith as 'of Wales': Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/30 fol. 196r (Anthony Bacon to Walsingham, April 1588), Meredith's description of England: London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 25/30 fol. 63r (John Aylmer, bishop of London, to Lord Burghley, 27 June 1577).

<sup>17</sup> Meredith's connection with Paget & Morgan: Kew, The National Archive, SP 15/29 fol. 133r (Jan. 12 1586. Thomas Rogers to Walsingham), Meredith's re-imprisonment: Kew, The National Archive SP 12/195 fol. 129r (The names of Priests committed to sundry prisons, with annotations in Tho. Phelipps's hand, suggesting various punishments).

<sup>18</sup> F. Young, *English Catholics and the Supernatural, 1553–1829* (London, Routledge, 2016), p. 38.

English and Continental Catholicism following the Reformation and stresses the connections and interchange of ideas. This thesis challenges the notion that eschatology and apocalypticism in early modern England was a Protestant monopoly.

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